Legislative Council

Thursday, 30th October, 1952.

CONTENTS.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Moving Vacant Homes from Chandler.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of the number of vacant houses at Chandler and the urgent need for homes to be made available both for railway and public use at Merredin and other Goldfields centres, will the Housing Commission consider the moving of these homes to such towns, especially Merredin?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter of removal of houses is receiving consideration, but, in view of a number of difficulties, it is unlikely that a decision can be reached for some time.

RAILWAYS.

As to Improving Interstate Booking Office.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the new Commonwealth rail service coming into operation, which will provide one of the finest trains in the world, would he consider the alteration of the present interstate booking office to bring it into line with the Tourist Bureau and the booking offices in other States?

The MINISTER replied:

Improvement of the existing interstate booking office is not practicable without extension of the main station buildings, for which funds are not available.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES (REGISTRATION FEES) ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture and read a first time.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. Sir Charles Latham—Central) [3.5]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [3.6]: I do not intend to raise any opposition to the third reading of the Bill, but I view it as being very important, particularly from the financial aspect affecting the individual who, unfortunately, might become a patient in an infectious diseases hospital. We have been told that out of the 70s., which is the cost of maintaining a bed for a day in such a hospital, 35s. will be made up in this way—8s. from the Commonwealth, plus 4s. if the person concerned is a member of an approved health scheme, and that scheme will also provide 9s., making 21s. per day, which will leave 14s. to be found by the individual patient.

Whilst that might not be regarded as a large amount if the patient was in hospital for only a short period, we have to remember that sometimes the period drifts on for two months because of the time it takes to make certain that a patient is not still able to transmit the disease to others. That individual is required, by law, to pay the amount of 14s. per day over and above the 21s. We realise also that the remaining 35s. is made up of 23s. 4d. paid by the Government, and 11s. 8d. by the local authority. Nevertheless that still leaves an amount of 14s. to be paid by the individual patient, his parents or estate. This is a question which the Government should seriously consider.

I do not know that there is any comparison between a patient treated in an ordinary hospital and one who is in an infectious diseases hospital. People suffering from some types of illnesses can be treated in their own homes, but those who have contracted infectious diseases are compelled by law to go to an infectious diseases hospital for treatment. This compulsion also applies to some persons who may not have the disease—they are naturally immune from complaints such as diphtheria—but are carriers of the germ, and therefore are a greater potential danger to the public than the person who

contracts the disease. The nature of the latter's complaint can be diagnosed and the patient is then treated in hospital.

When one member of a family contracts diphtheria, for instance, the remainder of the family are examined to find out whether they are carriers. For the protection of the public, carriers in the metropolitan area are transferred to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, and in this respect I see no difference between such a carrier and a person suffering from T.B. The Commonwealth Government bears the cost of payment for the T.B. sufferer, and I think the inmate of the Infectious Diseases Hospital should be a charge on the Public Health Department and, in that way, on the public generally. One who offends against the law is imprisoned and, if he becomes ill, is treated, the cost of treatment being met by the State; yet the person segregated because he is suffering from an infectious disease has to make a contribution of 14s. per day to the cost of his treatment in the Infectious Diseases Hospital.

It has been said that if no charge were made by that hospital, the 8s. per day per patient would not be made available by the Commonwealth, but I doubt whether that is correct. The Commonwealth pays subsidies, such as that on wheat for home consumption—the relevant Bill was not passed by the Parliament of this State, though I understand the subsidy has not been withdrawn—and I do not think it would withdraw the payment of 8s. per day per patient. I realise that many of the statements made by members during the Address-in-reply debate, in an endeavour to bring various matters before the Government, are little heeded by Government departments, but I hope that what I have had to say today will not be treated in that way. I appeal to the Government to do something to relieve the burden on the individual who is unfortunate enough to contract an infectious disease and who is consequently compelled by law to undergo segregation in the Infectious Diseases Hospital.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [3.15]: I assure the hon. member that the points he has raised will be referred to the Health Department for examination and that I will make a point of personally bringing them to the notice of the Minister for Health.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, State Housing Act Amendment.

2, Mining Act Amendment (No. 2).

3, Albany Public Cemeteries Subsidies.

Passed.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [3.18]: At first, I was not enamoured of the Bill and did not intend to support it, but, having studied the measure, I think it is in many respects admirable, and I now intend to vote for the second reading. I think some people have been suffering under a misapprehension as to the proposed registration of certain types of nursing aides. This measure is not designed to make it easier for anyone taking up this work to become registered as a nurse. The opinion has been expressed that some girls who might intend to take up nursing would, under the provisions of this measure, have the opportunity of being registered irrespective of whether or not they have passed the prescribed examinations. That is not so, nor was it the intention of the Government when introducing the Bill.

This measure had its genesis in the experience we have gained in Government and private hospitals owing to the shortage of nurses. I think the term "nursing aide" should be altered to "hospital aide," or something of that nature which would not mislead the public with regard to the training or status of these people after the Bill—as I am sure it will—becomes law. In the past we have had experience of certain types of individuals setting themselves up before the public as nurses and they have been known by various names, in years past, such as "Sairey Gamps" and the like. Despite the fact that they may have impressed those who required their services, they did not similarly affect those engaged in the medical profession, and it is only within recent years that that type of person has been obliterated from the scene.

Unfortunately, in this State we have many Government and private hospitals in which there is more accommodation for patients than can be used, not because there is an insufficient number of beds, but because we have not the nurses to look after patients. I think this measure will help to overcome that situation. In times gone by, girls were taken into hospitals to assist in the nursing of patients and they were known as probationers. Usually those girls stayed for only short periods and after very little training they became dissatisfied or, on the other hand, those in charge have sometimes become dissatisfied with the trainees. That has resulted in a shortage of nurses in this State. I think the Kalgoorlie hospital is a glaring example. The intermediate ward has been closed down for months because of a lack of nurses, and no doubt that has been the experience of other hospitals throughout Western Australia.

Under the Bill it is intended that girls shall be given a certain amount of training, probably for about 12 months, and then they are to be registered as nursing aides. I am not enamoured with the word "nursing" in association with this type of work because I think it would tend to mislead the public in the event of any of these girls leaving the hospitals. I think they should be known as "hospital aides," or some other such title, and that name should apply only while they were working in a Government hospital or a hospital approved by the Trained Nurses Association. It is most unlikely that these girls would be capable of looking after a patient in his or her home, but they could perform many duties in hospitals if they were under proper supervision, and that would all help to overcome the shortage of nurses.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Why take the title of "nursing aides" away from them?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: It will not be taken away from them so long as they are working in hospitals.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Where else would they be working?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The reason why I would change the word from "nursing" to "hospital" is that when they leave a hospital they will not be able to call themselves, "nursing aides." If they were allowed to have that title, it would tend to mislead the public into thinking they were nurses, or had received training in nursing. Some members gave us the impression that these girls would actually become nurses and others said that it would give these girls a standing similar to that of a trained nurse, but that these girls would not have to take the examinations. It would be most unfair to girls who were prepared to undergo three years' training if, under this Bill, the nursing aides were able to obtain the standing of nurses. It would also be unfair to people who might seek their services, because nursing aides would not be able to carry out the instructions of medical practitioners.

I agree that these girls will serve a useful purpose and that their task will be an honourable and an onerous one. We have always looked upon the nursing profession as one of the noblest that any girl can undertake, and we must safeguard the interests of those who will offer themselves for this service. Only last week we had a Bill dealing with another profession allied to the medical profession—I refer to the Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment Bill—and I spoke in a similar strain on that measure.

While I support the Bill, we must keep this move within due bounds. These girls should have some type of recognition and I understand from Dr. Hislop's remarks that they will be adequately remunerated for their work. But I definitely oppose any move which will give them any standing in the profession once they leave a hospital. I support the Bill, but I understand that certain amendments may be moved in the Committee stage and in all probability I will support them.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILL—COOGEE-KWINANA RAILWAY.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2:

Hon. G. FRASER: There are one or two explanations regarding the end of the line that I would like the Minister to make. I assume that there will be certain run-ins into the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy's. premises.

The Minister for Railways: That is so.

Hon. G. FRASER: We have been told that the townsite to be established in that area will have a population of about 20,000 people and that the townsite will be close to the end of the line. What is the Government's intention regarding the provision of a station? Is the line merely to end like the old line does now, or is a station or siding to be constructed for the use of the people who will be residing in the area in the future? A large sum of money will be spent on this project and we want to make sure, before we endorse that expenditure, that full use will be made of the money.

I know that the main intention, in the early stages, is that the line shall be used for the cartage of materials for the various industries that are to be established in the area, and the only other purpose that I can see for the line is that it will be used for the benefit of the people in the new township. I also want to know whether there is a possibility that at some future date the line may be extended to Rockingham without any undue inconvenience.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The line, as proposed at present, is to implement the terms of the agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy., namely, that a line be built to the boundary of that company's area and that it approach from a westerly direction. Everyone knows that from a point there, certain tracks will be laid to the plant itself. I understand the layout inside the Kwinana area has not yet been decided upon because the company has brought Mr. Jones, an expert from America, to carry out that work and to design the whole plant. Following that, the line will be laid accordingly. It is proposed to construct the rail-

way to skirt the B.H.P. area which will lead to the refinery site in a westerly direction.

No special consideration has been given to the question of how the railway would serve the possible needs of the townsite, but no doubt that could be worked out without difficulty. Nor do I think any consideration has been given to extending the line to Rockingham. In these times, when planning railways, a line is established to handle heavy traffic, otherwise short leads are employed. That is universal practice throughout the world. In reply to Mr. Fraser, I would say that probably not much difficulty would be experienced in implementing the two points he has raised.

Hon. G. Fraser: You will see that consideration is given to them?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will mention them to the Co-ordinator of Works and the Railways Commission.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [3.35] in moving the second reading said: The Bill contains six amendments, the principal one dealing with the definition of "native." The other five are complementary. The Native Administration Act in its present form separates the descendants of the Australian aborigines into groups, each with different rights and privileges in the community. There is what I shall term a dividing line written into the Act and this is based on the proportion of aboriginal blood running in the veins of the person. It is set down in the Act at one-quarter of the original black man's blood. "Quadroon" is the definition used.

All descendants of quarter-blood or less are classed as natural-born citizens and as such they enjoy all the privileges and immunities and are liable to share in all the responsibilities of a citizen in the same manner as other Australians with the exception of those with more than one-quarter aboriginal blood. In effect, the Act says they are citizens from birth; therefore, I shall say that they are above the line. Those below the line, namely, natives with more than one quarter aboriginal blood in their veins are classed by the Act as "natives."

Such people can never become citizens on equal terms with their relatives above the line; they can never be certain of having the same privileges of citizenship as are enjoyed by those who inherit citizenship at birth. Under the Native (Citizenship Rights) Act this group can apply to a board for a certificate of citizenship. If they succeed they are merely on approval at all times, because the certificate can be cancelled in the same manner as it is granted. Under the Native Administration Act, the Minister can grant exemption certificates, but they, too, can be cancelled.

So we find that this proportion of blood line is having the effect of setting up two separate kinds of citizenship. One is a permanent birthright and the other is simply a license. One gives natives an equal start in the community, while the other tends to discourage and has a psychological reaction which is beginning to show that this distinction is not good for the people it concerns or the nation as a whole. Better living standards and education have advanced the native of mixed blood and many of these people are dissatisfied with their position. They have dignity and many are very sensitive about their status in the general setup of our society which is imposed upon them only by law. One could quote cases for hours of anomalies and absurdities, but I will mention only a few.

Intermarriage has set the Department of Native Affairs a difficult task in trying to establish what proportion of blood a person may have for the purpose of determining on which side of the line he will be classed. The Commissioner's report at present on the Table of the House indicates that his officers are dealing in fractions as small as 1/128ths to decide whether a person of mixed blood is eligible for social service benefits or citizenship rights. In the Commonwealth Social Services Act the line is drawn at half-blood, and although these people are taxed at the same rate as every other taxpayer, a fraction as small as that which I have mentioned can disqualify them for old-age, invalid or widows' pensions. If they are exempt from the Natives Administration Act or have citizenship rights, they then qualify. Members may well imagine the almost impossible task which the department will be set as the years go by in so far as checking ancestry is concerned. The Bill before the House will obviate that problem.

In his report the Commissioner refers to the position at present as a hopeless muddle. I would like to mention an example of a Western Australian girl who is a triple certificated nurse and is at present working in Melbourne. She is a natural-born citizen while there because Victoria has given all people with aboriginal blood full citizenship. However, in Western Australia she is classed as a "native". I also know of a returned soldier who is married and lives in very good circumstances in the metropolitan area. He was a citizen while in the army but since being discharged he must apply for a certificate of citizenship. We have a schoolteacher drafted into the same group by this line.

The Minister for Transport: Have they applied for citizenship?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I will come to that.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is the schoolteacher on the permanent staff?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The schoolteacher was trained at the Teachers' College at Claremont and is employed on the permanent staff. There are many other people in responsible occupations who are, because of a fraction of blood, placed below the line which makes these distinctions. These people maintain that citizenship is their birthright and they will not apply for certificates because they look upon them as something akin to tickets of leave. The Bill is designed to move the dividing line and place all descendants with less than full aboriginal blood on the same level. That is all it proposes to do. There is already provision in the Act to meet cases where the individual is not yet fitted to assume the responsibilities of citizenship and the Bill does not alter that provision.

The colony of Western Australia was established in 1829 and it is no credit to us to have to admit, after 123 years of close contact with the original inhabitants, that there are still some who are unable to take their place as citizens in the community. There would be very few of the less than full-blood, but of the full-bloods there are many. These people can still be seen in this State living in dirt behind a breakwind of scrub, sharing their humble abode with their families. It is apparent that universal citizenship is impracticable as many of these people still require the aid and guidance of the department and of the missions for several years to come. The change must be made gradually as circumstances require. The Bill is one step forward and will remove a barrier from the Act which in these times does no more than establish a separate race of Western Australians who are resentful of that separation.

It is important to realise that the excellent work of churches, schools, missions and the department itself has lifted the moral and educational standards of these people to a much higher level than it was when this Act was placed on the statute book in 1936. Their work is now rapidly bringing results. We can build up the morale of the people whom they are rehabilitating by giving them freedom of citizenship. It will be a tremendous help to reach the goal of ultimate absorption into the community generally. That is the only answer to a problem which has been permitted to grow in the social structure of the State until we find now a race of near-white Australians being separated by a line from the general community and even from their families.

The Commonwealth Government has framed legislation along these lines for the Northern Territory, and Victoria has already enacted a similar law. This State is lagging behind, even though it is probably better equipped to accept legislation of this type than are the other States. It is apparent that a small amendment to Section 4 of the Act may be necessary to authorise the department to continue its assistance to those who would not be defined as natives for the purposes of that measure. But it requires little alteration, and the Government would have ample time to put the Bill through during the current session of Parliament. I had overlooked this aspect, but I have no doubt that if the House agrees to the Bill now before it, the complementary measure could be brought down very quickly.

There are not a great number of natives under the control of the department. The available statistics up to the 30th June, 1951, show the population of full-bloods as 8,606. An estimated number of 6,000 are still living in the bush in a primitive and nomadic style. Of the mixed bloods there are 6,486 and these are comprised of 1,669 males, 1,662 females, 2,855 children. The children are not segregated into sexes and it appears that these mixed-bloods have a preponderance of female children over male children, which, of course, is not a particularly good outlook, and certainly no help to those who are doing their best to assimilate them into the community. So the whole known native population in the State is not as much as we might think.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Does that 6,500 include all coloured people?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: All the coloured people who are under the control of the Department of Native Affairs. The figures I have given are from the statistics of the department. I assume the quadroons to whom the Act does not apply are not included in that number. These are purely departmental figures. The total population of 21,092 is spread throughout the following divisions:—

District.	Full bloods.	Other bloods.
Northern—		
East Kimberley	1,905	237
West Kimberley	2,479	514
North-West—		
Pilbara	1,723	338
Gascoyne	501	251
Central—		
Central	142	1,420
Eastern Goldfields	1,100	574
Murchison	588	1,319
Southern—		
Great Southern	168	1,833
	8,606	6,486

As members will observe, the total of full-bloods and mixed-bloods shown in the table is 15,092. The balance making up the grand total of 21,092 comprises the unclassified coloured people living beyond the confines of civilisation. The statistics show that in the Central Province the number of mixed-bloods seem to be increasing. In the back areas, however, where the full-bloods still predominate, they are greatly in excess of the mixed-bloods. It is in the districts closer to the metropolis and in the farming areas where most of the mixed-bloods are to be found.

Members must know that the number of that type is increasing very rapidly, so much so that the department and some of the coloured people themselves are in a tangle in their endeavours to ascertain just exactly what is the legal standing of natives in the community. I understand that the situation has already developed to the stage where proceedings were taken in the Full Court to determine the issue. I do not know the facts in that regard, but the Commissioner of Native Affairs refers in his report to the case having been determined by that tribunal. There is no doubt that some of the other people affected are beginning to consider taking similar proceedings before the court to determine their position. I do not know how the situation will straighten itself out.

It appears to me that it is time something definite was included in the Act so that there will be no dispute about the position of the coloured people. It is not colour that counts, but the proportion of aboriginal blood in their veins. I suggest that the line of demarcation be fixed in the centre, as it were. That might be one way of overcoming the trouble. There is still in the provisions of the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act ample scope for the full-bloods to take advantage of the opportunity to obtain citizenship rights. The measure also empowers the Commissioner to bring within the scope of the legislation individuals of less than full-blood so that they may be afforded the protection of the department. It will enable the natives concerned to be brought under the Act as it stands today. All I propose to do is to move the line of demarcation to the centre, so that there will be no dispute as to who is black and who is white. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [3.57]: The Bill seems to me to be divided into three main parts.

Hon. L. A. Logan: A sprat to catch a mackerel!

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes. The three parts are designed to appeal to three different sections of the community, and it might be said that it is a Bill suggesting ministerial trickery. As Mr. Logan interjected, it is a sprat to catch a mackerel. The appeal is to the three different sections representative of the people. The first consists of those who believe in price-control; the second those who have tried to do what they could to protect the dairying industry, and the third section comprises those who favour the repeal of the Profiteering Prevention Act. I do not know what the Bill, if agreed to, will achieve.

I shall support the second reading, but at the Committee stage I shall endeavour to secure the deletion of at least two of the clauses. The one which seeks to effect an amendment that concerns the Dairy Products Marketing Act should have been introduced as an amendment to that measure. I understand the alteration proposed was in consequence of the State Ministers for Agriculture having agreed at a conference with the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture to adopt that course. I fail to see why it was necessary to give effect to that agreement by way of an amendment to the price-control legislation.

It could much better have been effected by an amendment to the Dairy Products Marketing Act of 1934-37. I am sorry the Minister for Agriculture is not in his place this afternoon. If he were present, he could enlighten us on the reason for the course adopted. However, as I assume that the debate will be adjourned, we shall have an opportunity later on to hear the Minister's explanation. I fail to see why the matter is dealt with in the Bill now before the House.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It should have been embodied in a separate measure.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, one to amend the Dairy Products Marketing Act. If that course had been adopted, we would then have had to deal simply with the question of the continuance or otherwise of price-control. The real crux of the Bill is to be found in Clause 3 which seeks to amend Section 18 with regard to the duration of the Act. The final clause in the Bill deals with the proposal to repeal the Profiteering Prevention Act.

Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.21 p.m.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: As I was saying, I fail to see why it was necessary to incorporate almost three Acts in the one Bill. Only last week wheat and barley prices were released from control. I think that two years ago a Select Committee was appointed in another place. It brought in strong recommendations for

the decontrol of meat prices, but it has taken the Government two years to act on that advice, despite the fact that in the last two months the price of sheep has dropped week by week, and the markets and freezing works have been glutted. Lambs have not been able to reach the treatment works.

Beef prices have also, within the last six weeks, dropped by approximately £15 a head. By a recent alteration, before price-control was lifted on beef, beef prices dropped 1d. per lb. Price-control, if it ever served a useful purpose—I repeat, "if it ever served a useful purpose"—has certainly long outlived its usefulness, and this House, if at this stage it agrees to the abolition of price-control, will at least have wiped off the statute book one of the controls which has affected the life of the community in general. I have nothing further to say at this stage, but I reserve to myself the right to decide how I shall vote when the question is put. My vote will depend on the matters brought forward by other members.

HON. C. H. HENNING (South-West) [4.24]: There is a correct and proper time for price-control, and it is, particularly, when supplies have to be diverted to the national use, such as in time of war when shortages definitely occur. But now, seven years after the war has terminated, I am doubtful as to the use of controls of any sort. I believe the original motives behind control have been lost sight of, and the motive is now political—to endeavour, unsuccessfully, to keep down the cost of living. A little while ago I had a look at the "C" series index, and I compared it with the latest price-control declaration in the "Government Gazette", which was issued on Friday, the 17th October. Of the first 20 grocery items in the "C" series index, 15 are controlled under the latest schedule. Of course, there are many others.

I cannot see why certain commodities here should be controlled particularly in view of the statement by the Minister. He said there were three-monthly conferences and that when goods were in full supply and marketed on a competitive basis, they should be decontrolled. He went on to say that when those conditions applied, price-control had no further advantage as it added to costs and stifled competition. If that is so, why do we find bread on the controlled list? Bread is in plentiful supply, and so is flour. But we are definitely stifling competition by having a fixed price, and also by the fact that all qualities are rated the same.

One of the greatest disadvantages of price-control is that the question of quality does not in any way come into it. One of the evils of price-control is, I believe, that it is the main plank in a Government-controlled economy. We in Australia are definitely working that way, I am sorry to say, no matter what the political colour of the Government in power. Has price-fixing been successful at all in controlling inflation? Everyone knows the answer to that question. Many will say that if it were on a Federal basis it would be effective, but I think many more controls will have to be brought in if we are to control prices.

In dealing with the wage index numbers of the adult males in Western Australia, it is most interesting to read in the "Monthly Bulletin of Employment Statistics" No. 159 of August, 1952, the average weighted weekly wage index numbers for adult males in industrial groups as given in Table 13; and it gives them for every State. There are 14 industrial groups, and taking 100 as the index number as at the 30th June, 1939, we find that today, in ten of those groups, Western Australia is the highest; in three others it is second; and in the remaining one it is third. It also has the highest average index number, which is 309 for all States. The nearest to the average is New South Wales with 302. This legislation, as Mr. Loton has said, has been brought down in three parts. The Government, of course, knows why it has done that, but I am inclined to think that if each one had been brought down separately there would have been every chance that price-control, at least, would have been rejected.

I also believe that, in spite of all we hear about record dividends, high wages and inflation, record dividends are not in proportion to any other rise. I think the average dividend throughout Australia is 8 per cent. which is not double what it was before the war, whereas everything else is. I believe that many of the controls pander to inefficiency and remove the incentive necessary for that personal drive on the part of those concerned to turn out a good article at a cheap price. Let us examine some of the effects this control has had on the national economy and take wool as an example. Wool is uncontrolled, whereas wheat is controlled in order to give the consumers of Australia a cheaper item of food. It is no wonder that many of our primary producers have gone over from the production of wheat to the growing of wool.

That has to a large extent upset our national economy and will continue to do so for a long time to come. For as long as we have controls, we will have such upsets and the people of Australia will in the end pay a far greater price for the controls than the few benefits—if any—that they will receive from them. Members may think I am inconsistent in supporting the portion of the measure dealing with the fixed price for dairy products, but I think they will agree that primary production generally is in a different category from the rest of industry.

The manufacturer knows what his goods cost to produce and can add his depreciation and profit and place his goods on the market at a set price. He has another great advantage, in that he is protected by tariffs and excise while the primary producer has to compete, not only on the Australian market but also on the markets of the world in which his surplus must be sold. The world market price, particularly in the case of dairy produce, is far below the cost of production in Australia and yet, if the producer sends his goods to market, he has to take what is offered for them, in spite of the fact that he has to purchase his supplies in a market the prices of which are held up by protection from oversea competition.

I do not think I am inconsistent in this regard. I come now to the third portion of the Bill, which deals with the repeal of the Profiteering Prevention Act, and I believe that is the crux of the measure. I consider it will be necessary to take two bites at this cherry. We will have to take the first bite this year by passing this measure, and in due course the other bite will have to be taken. I am reluctant but feel that there is no course open to me other than to support the second reading.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.35]: I agree thoroughly with the remarks of Mr. Loton and, to a large extent, with those of Mr. Henning. In my opinion the Bill savours of legislative trickery. As Mr. Loton said, it is in three sections, two of which are barely related to one another and should have been contained in separate measures in order to give members here, or even in another place, an opportunity of voting on each question as they wished. The Bill before us gives no option but to vote for one type of control and repeal another. Whichever way members vote, they must retain one set of controls and get rid of the other.

The Government has placed members in an invidious position by bringing the Bill down in this form. Mr. Henning referred to the clause dealing with price-control over dairy products. That provision may seem all right, to some extent, as at times dairy products may be in short supply, but for a number of years—even before we had price-control—the retail price of butter and cheese was controlled by the manufacturers themselves. There was a margin set for the retailer as his profit on those commodities and I do not see that price-control, in this instance, will help in any way.

Its only effect is to make more work for, and require more officers in, the Prices Branch. Mr. Henning said that goods in short supply should be under price-control and I agree but that is not the policy in this State today. Many types of goods are not in short supply now and would be sold more cheaply on a competitive market, but are still under the control of the Prices Branch. Mr. Henning referred to some of those items and there are others such as alcoholic liquor, of which there is a plentiful supply. Before price-control was introduced alcoholic liquor was under a controlled price maintained by the manufacturers and the U.L.V.A.

Hon. C. H. Henning: It was a fixed price.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. The same applies to cigarettes, which used to come under the control of the Prices Branch, and that is another line out of which the Government gets large sums in excise duty. These goods should still be controlled as they were originally, without interference by the Prices Branch. If the Prices Branch was fair and did justice in some of the matters it handled, well and good; but very often that is not the case. It fails to make allowances for certain rises and, in other instances, makes the allowances in the wrong way. It is high time we finished with price-control in Western Australia and allowed our economy to return to normal. In view of the way in which this Bill is framed, I can do nothing but vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

BILL—WAREHOUSEMEN'S LIENS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The Bill, although of some size, is simple and straightforward. Its purpose is to afford greater protection to persons whose business is the storing of goods for other people, and also to give protection to the owner of the goods. Under common law there is no lien over goods to anyone storing them except in respect of any work done on the goods. Quite frequently goods are stored for lengthy periods and storage charges fall into arrears.

The warehouseman has then recourse to suing for recovery of his fees. However, for various reasons, it is often very difficult to trace the owner of the goods in order to serve the necessary process. The court's consent to serve a process by way of advertisement must then be obtained, and the entire proceedings may become a costly and difficult business. It is for this reason that the Warehousemen's Association has asked the Government to follow the example set in each of the other States of the Commonwealth and introduce special legislation to protect both the warehouseman and the owner of the goods. The result is this Bill which is based mainly on the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian measures.

A warehouseman is defined in the Bill to be " a person lawfully engaged in the business of storing goods as a bailee for hire or reward." Subject to certain conditions, a warehouseman will have a lien on all goods deposited with him for storage. This lien will cover storage, insurance, transport, labour, and other expenses, as well as any charges incurred by the warehouseman as a result of the owner of the goods defaulting in his payments. The conditions with which the warehouseman will have to comply to obtain a lien on goods stored with him are detailed in the Bill. They include the giving of notice of the lien within three months of the date of deposit of the goods to the owner or owners of the goods; to any person holding a bill of sale over the goods; and to any other person whom the warehouseman is aware has an interest in the goods.

If the warehouseman fails in his obligation to give such notice, his lien on the goods becomes void after a period of three months from the date that the goods were stored with him. Whenever any part of the storage charges becomes 12 months in arrears, the warehouseman may give one month's notice of his intention to sell the goods to recoup his costs. Such notice must be sent to the owner of the goods, to the grantee of a bill of sale over them and to any other person who, to the warehouseman's knowledge, has an interest in the goods.

If the arrears are not paid within a month, the warehouseman is then required to advertise his intention to sell the goods and to specify the time and place of the sale. Such advertisement must appear in a local newspaper at least twice, with an interval of at least seven days between the advertisements. If there is no suitable local paper, the advertisements must appear in a Perth daily newspaper. A period of 14 days must then elapse before the sale can be held. Any person having an interest in the goods may apply to the local court for an order to stay the proceedings for sale of the goods for such period and on such terms as the court considers fit.

If at any time before the goods are sold a person claiming an interest in them pays to the warehouseman the amount owing, no further proceedings for the sale shall be taken. Should this payment be made by a person who has an interest in the goods, but is not the person primarily liable for the charges, the person making the payment may recover the amount, together with interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum from the person primarily liable. From the proceeds of the sale the warehouseman shall satisfy his lien and pay any surplus to the original owner or any other person who may be entitled to payment.

Where there are conflicting claims to the surplus, the warehouseman shall pay the surplus into the local court for allocation as the magistrate deems fit. If no claim is made to the surplus, the warehouseman is required to pay it into the Treasury. If an applicant to the sum establishes his claim within six years, refund shall be made to him. The Bill provides that its provisions shall apply to goods stored prior and subsequent to its commencement as an Act. I commend the Bill to the House. It has been requested by the Warehousemen's Association to lighten some of their difficulties, and it is based on the legislation existent in other Australian States. Not only does it protect the warehouseman, but it also takes heed of the interests of the owner of the stored goods. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th October.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [4.47]: I secured the adjournment of the debate to obtain some information on the Bill. I would like to know from the Minister if the road to Fremantle along the river frontage will be affected by this measure. I have contacted persons with a knowledge of traffic problems, and they do not favour this proposition. They consider that the present regulating of traffic is more suitable. Whenever motorists get the chance, they tend to travel in the centre lane of any highway, and if vehicles are restricted to entering a main highway at every third or fourth side street, there will be a stream of traffic queued up waiting to enter the main highway, which will create congestion and accentuate the number of accidents that occur.

In my opinion, there should be caution signals placed at the intersections where side streets connect with the highway to warn motorists of their danger. I notice that at present a big "Stop" sign is painted in yellow at many intersections, and this has the effect of making motorists stop before entering a main highway. We have no traffic problems on the Goldfields at present, but although the Bill is intended to apply only to the metropolitan area, it could be made applicable to the Goldfields at a later date. Only yesterday, while travelling on a trolley-bus, I witnessed an accident, and I shall probably be called before the court to give evidence.

I submit that most accidents are caused by bad drivers. No matter what we do, we will always have bad drivers who will

not give way to anyone else and want to take control of the whole road. The man may be under the influence of liquor or there may be something else wrong with him. The fact remains that if everyone complied with the rules of the road, there would be no accidents. I cannot see that the Bill, if passed, will achieve any good result. The effect will be to slacken up the speed of traffic on the roads and it may cause harm instead of good. It will involve the Government in considerable expense because it will have to provide numerous signs in back streets indicating that no entrance is permitted and so forth. I intend to oppose the measure.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What about between Southern Cross and Coolgardie?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: What is wrong there?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Would you not like this legislation applied up there?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: We do not have any worries of this sort in that district and the road accidents there are very few in number. There are plenty of side roads that are made use of.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is the trouble. People drive in from byroads on to the main road.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I still claim that accidents are due to neglect on the part of drivers themselves. Irrespective of what we may do, that cannot be avoided. I do not know of any instance in the back country that would furnish a reason for the legislation being applied in those parts. The trouble concerns the city more than the country areas.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Have you travelled down to Bunbury lately?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not know anything about that highway. I have not travelled down by road, only by train. I do not think the provisions of the Bill are necessary even in the city area. I was speaking to a gentleman who had just returned from a trip to England and he told me of the procedure adopted there. He said that at intervals circles were provided on long-distance roads such as the highway to Fremantle, and all cars had to proceed round those circles, thus necessitating the slackening of their speed. Caution signs were also placed on the main road where side streets joined up with the main thoroughfare. That might be one way of overcoming the difficulty here. At any rate, I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. H. HENNING (South-West) [4.53]: I shall be brief in my remarks. When I first read the Bill, I also had my doubts as to what it meant. I spoke to the Minister about it and at his instigation I interviewed Mr. Young of the Public Works Department. He put an entirely different complexion on the measure from that which I had gained at the outset. As the Minister pointed out, the object of the legislation is to promote the steady and even flow of traffic. It would be impossible to do that in the present built-up areas owing to the fact that compensation would have to be paid under Section 62 of the Public Works Act to anyone denied access to a road. I believe similar legislation is in force in New South Wales but up to the present its provisions have not been availed of, so far as Mr. Young knows.

The idea is not so much to give effect to this measure in the present built-up areas but rather in the new districts that are being developed contiguous to the metropolis. The intention is to pass the legislation and to give effect to it when necessary, particularly before the compensation in respect of restricted rights of access to a road becomes extremely expensive. Hence it is that the Bill provides in a very equitable manner what compensation shall be paid should any specified roads be proclaimed under the Act.

From the standpoint of traffic proceeding along roads at a reasonable pace, taking the Albany Highway out as far as Cannington by way of example, we find there are two lines of traffic provided for each way with a double line in the centre of the road. In reality, the provision for two lines of traffic is not of any great advantage because all the time vehicles are driven on to the highway from side streets and vehicles are parked along the thoroughfare. The result is that a motorist takes no notice of the inside line but drives only in the lane alongside the double lines.

Should it become necessary in any specified area to deny access to blocks alongside the main road, no vehicles would be allowed to park there and no vehicles would be allowed to drive in from side roads except at certain specified places. By that means motorists would make full use of the highway and would not be held up anywhere. Mr. Young cited to me the position in America and indicated what happens there. I do not suggest that the experience would be similar here. He pointed out how quickly industrial cities grew up two or three miles from other large centres. In that country double lanes are also provided. Everyone knows that Americans are speedy drivers and the traffic from north to south along main roads is very dense at different seasons, and many of those who are travelling use caravans. In fact, caravan parks are provided along the road and the result has been that the free flow of traffic has been quite disorganised. To cope with the difficulty, parallel roads have had to be provided at a cost that proved tremendous. We do not want anything of that description in Western Australia.

I believe the provisions of the Bill will be applied sensibly when the time arrives to give effect to the legislation. It will definitely help to promote the safety and even flow of road transport. Although the Minister for Railways might not agree with me, my opinion is that the future mode of transport will be by means of fast-moving motor vehicles. I would like the Minister when he replies to the debate to explain one point. When control of access roads is enforced, the Bill provides that this may be done by proclamation. I would prefer it to be done by way of a regulation. I understand that the Crown Law Department decided the better way would be to proceed by way of a proclamation. Perhaps the Minister in due course will explain the reason for a proclamation rather than a regulation. In the meantime, I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th October.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.0]: This Bill is so similar to measures we have had before us over the past years that it can almost be regarded as a hardy annual. One of the proposed amendments is to reduce the qualifying age for membership of this House from 30 to 21. I consider that we should not depart from what has been laid down in the Constitution for many years, but should leave the age at 30.

Hon. G. Fraser: You believe in living in the past.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The hon. member made a somewhat similar remark when we debated a Bill of this kind last session or the session before. I do not believe in living in the past, but I do believe in using plain commonsense.

Members interjected.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: A person of 21 years of age lacks quite a lot of business experience and experience of life generally because he has not had the opportunity to acquire it. I think that the members who have interjected know that only too well. I do not think anyone can say that young men or women of 21 have had the opportunity to gain the business experience and knowledge of life generally that would fit them to come into this Chamber.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Some are very intelligent at that age.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I will admit that is so, but intelligence is not the test of life. A person may be a university student until the age of 21 or over, and he may have all the intelligence necessary for one walk of life, but that does not give him a general experience of life. He may be educated along one track and may move amongst the one group of people and yet may not know an ear of wheat from an ear of barley. When a member is elected to this House he should have a fairly good knowledge of life and a fairly wide experience of business and of things in general to enable him to handle legislation dealt with here.

It has been said that if a person is qualified at 21 years of age to vote, there is no reason why he should not be qualified for election to this House. I do not think that is any criterion at all. It is a very poor reason for supporting this proposed amendment. Reference was made to the fact that a person of 21 was qualified to enter the Legislative Assembly, the House of Representatives or the Senate. That may be so, but this has never been a party House. A young person of 21 might be all right in the party machine but he would not be so successful in a place such as this, which is a House of review, where, to a great extent, a person is an individual and is relied upon by the people at all times to use his individuality in coming to decisions on legislation. It was said by Mr. Heenan that doctors, teachers and members of other professions were qualified at the age of 21. They may be qualified, but they are qualified along one line and have not the broad experience at that age which they attain later on through contact with clients or patients and people in other walks of life.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: We have had highly qualified airmen at the age of 21.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Probably. But a good airman may not make a good politician, and a good doctor may not make a good legislator.

Hon. L. Craig: There are no doctors of 21.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: There are doctors of 22 and 23 years of age.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not care whether it be 21, 22 or 23; it is too young.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Is it too young for the Federal Parliament?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think I referred to that a while ago and gave reasons to indicate that it was a different proposition altogether—the handling of legislation in this House as compared with the handling of it in the Federal Parliament. If the hon. member had been listening he would have heard my reasons for opposing the election of a person of that age to this House as against his election to the Assembly, the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He only just came in.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Another proposed amendment deals with the dual vote for husband and wife.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is a good one.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: This has always been regarded as a House for which a property qualification is necessary the franchise has been broadened over past years, so that it is now only necessary to pay the small sum of 7s. 6d. or less by way of weekly rental to enable a person to exercise the franchise for the Council. I think that some members overlook the fact that where the freehold of a property is in the name of the wife, the husband can become enrolled as a householder, and that makes the qualification very broad. If a bill had been introduced to increase the freehold value or the leasehold qualification, that would, in my opinion, have been doing something to provide a proper qualification for those having the right to vote, for a House of review, and would have been preferable to trying to reduce the value and bring the franchise as close to adult franchise as those who are responsible for the Bill desire. Possibly that would suit the party that has sponsored its introduction. We have only to look at what happened in Victoria under adult franchise to see what can occur. The party responsible for this Bill made quite a gain there; and I think I could say, without being particular as to anyone present, that this measure was introduced with a somewhat similar idea.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The present Government advocated it.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Some of the members of the Government may have done so, but it is not the policy either of the Liberal Party or the Country Party of this State. We are not responsible for anybody advocating anything over and above our party policies. I want members to understand that clearly. I think the hon. member will agree that he is not responsible to his party for anything but policy. A further clause in the Bill refers to plural voting. Those supporting the measure object to a person possibly having ten votes at a Legislative Council biennial election. Those who have property qualifications in more than one province are in a small minority.

I do not see any reason why a person who has the property qualification should not have the right to vote for the election of the representative for the province in which he has such property qualification. I think it only fair and reasonable that he should have the right to elect his representative. The position could arise where Bill Brown might be a householder in a province, while Jim Jones might have £100,000 worth of property, yet the man with the large property would only have an equal say with the man with the very small stake of a householder paying a rent of 6s. 9d. or so per week. It is farcical to suggest that a man with a large and beneficial stake in our country should not have the right to vote for the election of a parliamentary representative for the province in which he has that stake. When speaking on this measure, Mr. Heenan quoted some figures from the statistical returns for the 1952 biennial elections.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Are they not shocking?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They are, from what Mr. Heenan quoted. But I know that he quoted only the poorest and did not refer to the best of them. He spoke of the West Province.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That was a good one.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is a province which is recognised as a blue ribbon Labour seat, where the opposition is practically nil. What sort of return would one expect from a province like that? The hon. member who was elected knows very well that his people took it as a foregone conclusion that he would be elected and that is why quite a number of them did not trouble to vote. A somewhat similar situation developed in the Suburban Province, to which Mr. Heenan referred. There the position of the sitting member, Mr. Dimmitt, was very strong; and, as we all know, unless there is a solid fight and big opposition, there is not a good poll when voting is not compulsory. Even for the Legislative Assembly and the Federal elections there is nowhere near a 100 per cent. vote, even under compulsory voting. Very often it is about 80 per cent. Let us look at the figures for the Central Province, which tell a different story altogether. I was opposed by two Liberals. The number on the roll was 7,586 and the number voting was 4,397, giving a percentage of nearly 58 per cent.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: That is beautiful!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is quite a good percentage of people interested enough to go along and record a vote. I will not say that even all of them were interested enough to go along and vote, because I know that in certain sections of the province people were rounded up to vote. Motor cars were used to convey them to the polls and I would not be surprised if my opponents used horses and stock whips to round them up. However, the figures for that province show that there is a large number of people who take an interest in the elections. In the Avon Valley section 801 people voted and in that area they were not rounded up. In Mt. Marshall 512 voted and in the Moore area 614 went to the poll. That shows what interest these people take in elections and I maintain that the best

results are obtained where the voters are interested. In that case it is not necessary to drag people to the polls and compel them to vote; where compulsion is used people do not care which way they vote so long as they save a 10s. or £2 fine.

I have been round among the people during house-to-house canvasses and I maintain that the majority of womenfolk do not care if they have a vote or not; they cannot be bothered going to the polls if they can avoid it. The story put up by those supporting this Bill, as regards wives having votes for the Legislative Council, is so much eyewash. Very few wives want to vote because they are not interested; it is difficult enough to get them to vote at any time without trying to induce them to vote at Legislative Council elections.

Hon. G. Fraser: Then it will not do any damage if we give them the right to vote.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, it will, because it will impose a greater expenditure on the Electoral Department to check up on all these people and see that they have the right qualifications. Even Mr. Heenan, when he moved the second reading of the Bill, admitted that it was a little tricky for the ordinary person to fill in a claim card as an elector for the Legislative Council. If we give wives the opportunity to vote, it will make it more awkward still and the Electoral Department will have a harder job to get the rolls in order.

There is another aspect, too. Mr. Heenan suggested that this measure will increase the number of people on the rolls and if that is so electoral expenses will have to be increased. Members will have to contact more people, send out more circulars, and so on, and in a big area it will be a much more formidable task than it is at the moment. That will all entail increased expenses and to compensate for that we will probably have to make some move to increase parliamentary salaries. I can hear a few members laugh when I say that, but it is all too true. If any member had to go up for election as often as I have had in the last two or three years, he would find that it is a most expensive business. It is all very well for those who have a walkover, but they have not had my experiences over the last few years. If they had had that experience, they would understand why I do not intend to support this measure.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [5.20]: I intend to support the Bill. Mr. Baxter alluded to it as a hardy annual. I will do the same; it is a hardy annual which each year is allowed to grow in another place, is allowed to flower and fruit, is escorted to this House with all due respect and tradition, and is then allowed to perish. I cannot say this from my own knowledge because I have not been here to see how it perishes, but I have been told that it perishes because members blow on it with hot air and scorn. This Bill comes to the House from another place with the blessing of the Government of the day; it contains provisions which are the declared policy of the Government and which it promised to the people at the last election. The Government said that the franchise of this House would be broadened.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: That is right.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I have been told that it is not the policy of this Government and that this House is not entitled to support it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You voted against the man who wanted to support the Premier on this question.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I will support the Bill. If this is not the policy of the Government, or is not contained in its platform, then the Government must have two policies, one to delude the people and the other in their platform.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was not Government policy at the last election.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Everyone knows that it was. The Government promised the people that the franchise of this House would be broadened.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Mr. Watts clearly stated that it was.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: As an individual and not as a member of the Government.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The hon. member mentioned Clause 3 in which it is stated that a person of 21 years of age will be eligible to stand for election to this House. He laughed it to scorn and said that a person of 21 could never qualify as a member of this House because he had never had any experience of life.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Did you at that age?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I did.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Then you are one of very few.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I had fought in a war at the age of 21 in the same way as many of our boys have done. Men who have fought and bled for their country are surely entitled to the right to take part in the making of its laws. A man of 21 today is different from a man of 21 a few years ago. Educational facilities have been improved and there are more opportunities than there were years ago. I know of many men today who have handed over their businesses to their sons when those sons have reached the age of 21; farmers have

handed over the management of their farms when their sons have reached 21 years of age.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: But the fathers keep an eye on them.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Surely such people are entitled to be members of this House. We do not have to be supermen; some of us are, but not many. Mr. Baxter also said that to give a dual vote would make little difference because the womenfolk are not interested. I know of one gentleman in this House—and since I have been here I have learned to respect him very much—who spoke at my election in Carnarvon and he stressed this point of the property qualification. He said that it was only right that before a man was allowed to have a say in making the laws of this country he should first have a stake in it. There may be some merit in that; but if that is so, surely the wife of that man, who has worked and struggled alongside him, is entitled to equal rights! This is no longer a country of slavery where the woman is just pushed into the background. If she has worked and helped her husband to gain a stake in the country, surely she has a right to the privileges that he has gained.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: How many of them want it?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The gentleman to whom I referred said that he would support this Bill if it went the full distance. If that is so, why does he not support this measure which merely asks him to go one step forward? I can assure him that if he does support this Bill, he will get the chance next year to vote for a measure which will go the full distance.

Hon. L. A. Logan: He was only pulling your leg.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yesterday the Minister for Agriculture, when speaking to a certain measure, said that that Bill had been passed through another place without any trouble and therefore it should pass through this Chamber in the same way. He asked members to be consistent. If that principle is applied to one Bill then it should apply to all Bills. This measure went through the Legislative Assembly without any trouble and it was sent here with the blessing of the Government, which many members of this House support. How are those members going to face their electors if they defeat this Bill again?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I am not frightened of facing mine.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Mr. Baxter went on to say that because only a small number of people had voted at the elections, it showed that they were not interested in this House. I beg to differ and I say that it was because they have no regard for this House, because they believe it has such a narrow franchise. If the franchise were to be broadened, more people would be enrolled and that would create a greater interest in this branch of the Legislature. If I were to tell members some of the things that I have heard people say about this House it would amaze them. When I was elected one gentleman shook me by the hand and said, "You have gained a seat in the Old Men's Home." Another came to me and, as he congratulated me, he said, "Dear, oh dear, I never thought you would join the House of Fossils." That is what people think of this House.

Members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on the House.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I bow to your ruling, Sir. If the franchise were to be broadened and made more democratic—I say that without casting any reflection on the House—I am sure people would take more interest in it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: As much as they do now.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Some of the figures for the last election were appalling, and I cannot wonder at it. If only one-third of the people are allowed to have a say in the election of members to this House, what can we expect? The Bill is only one short step forward, and surely we must move with the times. When this House was first constituted it was probably in the best interests of the State that we should have a property qualification; but times have altered and in these days people are better educated and more enlightened, and they are anxious to take part in the governing of the country. I think they should be given that chance.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: More so than years ago?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I said a while ago that a certain class of people should be included in the franchise for this House and I think there are members of this House who served in the Armed Forces who would agree with me on that point. A man who has fought and bled for his country is entitled to have a say in the governing of it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is that in the Bill?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: No, but it should be.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The hon. member would not pass it if it did contain that provision.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: It is not asking too much to ask for the dual vote. I repeat, any woman who has stood by her husband and helped him to build up a stake in this country should be entitled to exercise the franchise for this House. I support the measure.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.30]: I propose to vote for the Bill, as I have, in the past, supported other similar

measures. I feel that if young fellows were prepared to fight for their country and help save us when they are 21 years of age, they should be considered eligible for membership of this House. I want to see the age brought down to 21 years in order to give these young men a stake in the country, just as we give it to the man of 30 years of age. These young men get married and bring families into the world. Most of them get married—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Some of them.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The hon. member has said some of them. I would reply that the others do not get married because they are not able to obtain homes, and so they feel it would not be wise to marry and raise a family. I am not going to say that any person at the age of 21 is capable of becoming a member of this House. We know that there are different ways of electing these young men so that they may become candidates to contest these seats. There are also the electors, whose responsibility it is to elect these men, whether they are capable of representing them or not. That is my argument concerning the candidate of 21 years of age.

I would now like to say a few words about the question of the dual vote. We take our wives as partners for life. We swear that we are going to abide together, bring children into the world and do the best we can for the country and for one another. Now the intention is to bar the wife from having a stake in the country, and it is not proposed to give her a vote.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: She is not being barred from having a stake in the country.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I say she is entitled to have a vote for this House. A woman is not in the house for one purpose only; she is there to share our life. She is there for the purpose of cooking the family's tucker, looking after the children and doing the housekeeping generally. I say definitely that my wife is entitled to share all I have.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You could take it in alternate years to vote.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: We have lived together happily and, like every other member, I would like my wife to have a vote for this House. There are, of course, ways by which a wife can secure a vote for this House. She can do so if she is a joint freeholder or the owner of a property. We should make it a joint vote. The wife of each one of us should be entitled to record her vote as she thinks fit, as is the case with those women who have the qualifications to which I have just referred. It would not make extra work for the Electoral Department; it might give members a bit more work, as it would be necessary to put the womenfolk on the rolls; but that would be no hardship.

It has been said that it costs a lot to run elections. Of course it does, but it would cost a lot more if the job were not done properly. If the job is being done properly and the electorate looked after, a member would not have any fear of being opposed. I have seen a lot of legislation passed in another place which has come to this Chamber for review in the full knowledge that members supporting the Government would be against it. I have often wondered whether this has been engineered.

I do not accuse the Government of doing that, but very often we have had Bills before us which have been passed in another place and, on the measures being considered here, we have found members on the Government side have split their votes in order to defeat them. I have known that to happen on a number of occasions. Of course it is very nice for members to lead people to believe that they will support this and support that, but when they come here it is a different story altogether It is pleasing to see Bills of this nature being brought down as it will help people to take more interest in parliamentary affairs; it will help them to know that there does exist a Government of the country. Schoolchildren should be told more of what takes place in Parliament and what the Government is doing. I was very pleased to note the other night the number of young girls who came along with the idea of seeing what was going on and listening to the debate.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you want to put them on the roll, too?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No, I would not do that until they were 21 years of age. On the other hand, if they get married prior to 21 and if they have property, then I would say yes, because then they would be shouldering a responsibility. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Boylen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.37 p.m.