cently published policy by your Minister for Railways with reference to certain railway lines classed by him as unpayable.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 24th September, 1953.

CONTENTS.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Freight Comparison with Non-claimant States.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What financial result would be achieved by the W.A.G.R. if the same freight rates as operate in the non-claimant States were applied in Western Australia?

(2) What are the freights operating in those States for distances of 100, 200 and 350 miles for the following classes of goods:—

(a) Wheat;
(b) other grains;
(c) wool;
(d) farm machinery;
(e) goods, Class 1?

(3) What are the rates for the same distances and classes of goods in Western Australia, including the proposed increases?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) On the rates to apply from the 1st October, 1953, an increase in revenue of approximately 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. should result.

(2)—

	100 miles.	200 miles.	350 miles.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Queensland—			
Wheat	36 8	48 9	54 6
Other grains	36 8	59 11	77 8
Wool	*	*	*
Farm Machinery	110 11	177 8	261 5
Goods, Class 1	110 11	177 8	261 5
New South Wales—			
Wheat	37 0	59 0	74 0
Other Grains	63 0	79 0	93 0
Wool	18 0†	33 0†	44 0†
Farm Machinery	120 0‡	214 0‡	280 0‡
Goods, Class 1	120 0	214 0	280 0
Victoria—			
Wheat	39 7	52 4	64 10
Other grains	38 0	50 2	62 2
Wool	15 9†	22 11†	28 7†
Farm Machinery	101 1	188 0	275 1
Goods, Class 1	101 1	188 0	275 0

* Special rates point to point only.
† Bale rates approximately 7 bales to the ton.
‡ Lesser rates available for 5 ton consignments per 4-wheeled wagon.

(3) From the 1st October, 1953—

	100 miles.	200 miles.	350 miles.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Wheat	33 5	44 8	57 5
Other grains	33 5	44 8	57 5
Wool	89 6	127 0	159 6
Farm Machinery	99 5	157 6	210 0
Goods, Class 1	99 5	157 6	210 0

(b) As to Effect of Applying Eastern States' Rates.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Are the Western Australian railway freight rates higher or lower than those of other States?

(2) If so, approximately by what percentage?

(3) If freights were charged at the same rate as in other States would the Western Australian railways cover—

(a) working expenses;

(b) working expenses plus interest?

(c) have a surplus?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The rates in all States vary considerably, but other than for a few short distance hauls the rates are, and will be after the 1st October, lower in Western Australia than in the other States.

(2) The percentages differ greatly according to the commodity and length of haul. The rates effective in Western Australia for the 1st October, 1953, are approximately 15 per cent. below the average of the rates operative in other States.

(3) (a) Yes.

(b) More than likely.

(c) Possibly.

(c) As to Toodyay Station, Staff and Tonnage.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What staff was employed at the railway station at Toodyay for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(2) What was the tonnage consigned to the Toodyay railway station for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(3) What was the tonnage consigned from the Toodyay railway station for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Three.

(2) 1,772 tons of paying traffic.

(3) 3,299 tons of paying traffic.

(d) As to Price for Loco. Coal.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Railways:

What is the present price, per ton, of coal used for loco. purposes from—

(1) Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd.;

(2) Griffin Coal Mining Coy.;

(3) Western Collieries Ltd.?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 68s. per ton subject to review after the cost of production is determined.

(2) 70s. per ton.

(3) 65s. per ton pending completion of negotiations.

(e) As to Rocky Gully Bus Service.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has a request been received for the extension of the railway bus service from Rocky Gully, via Mt. Barker to Albany?

(2) If so, has a decision been reached in regard to the matter?

(3) If so, what has been decided, and if not, will he have early consideration given to the matter?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) Yes.

(f) As to Report on Burakin-Bonnie Rock Line.

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the report and recommendations of the Transport Board in respect to the Burakin-Bonnie Rock railway?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

FIRE BRIGADES.

As to Local Authorities' General and Fire Rates.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

What was the annual general rate struck and the annual fire rate struck by each of the local governing authorities within the Metropolitan Fire District in the years 1935, 1945, 1950, 1951, 1952 and the current year?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

Name.	GENERAL RATES.							FIRE BRIGADE RATES.						
	1934–35.	1944–45.	1949–50.	1950–51.	1951–52.	1952–53.	1953–54.	1934–35.	1944–45.	1949–50.	1950–51.	1951–52.	1952–53.	1953–54.
Municipalities.	*Annual Value.*													
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
Claremont	2 4	1 9	1 11½	2 3½	2 5½	2 6	....	....	....	....	....	2½	2½	....
Cottesloe....	1 10	1 9½	2 0	1 7½	2 0	2 4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
East Fremantle....	1 8	2 3	2 3½	2 3	2 6	2 6	....	2	1½	1¼	2	2½	2	....
Fremantle City	1 1½	1 10½	2 2½	2 3½	2 0	2 1½	....	2	....	1½	1½	2	1½	....
Guildford	1 10	1 10	2 6	2 6	2 6	2 6	....	1	....	2	2½	2½	2½	....
Midland Junction	1 8	2 2	1 10½	1 7½	1 7½	0 6	....	2	....	....	....	....	¼	....
North Fremantle....	1 5	1 7	1 6	1 8	2 6	2 6	....	....	....	....	....	....	2½	....
Perth—														
A.V.	0 9½	0 11	1 7½	1 10½	1 10½	2 1½	....	1½	1	1½	2	2	2	....
U.V.	....	0 3	0 5	0 4½	0 3½	0 3½	....	....	¼	¼	¼	½	½	....
Subiaco	1 5	1 8	1 7½	1 11	2 1	2 5	....	....	....	....	2	2¼	2¼	....
Road Boards.	*Unimproved Value.*													
	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.							
Bassendean	4·51	6·2	9	9	7	8	8	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Bayswater	6	6	9	9	5½	8½	7½	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Belmont Park	5	6	9	9	6½	7½	7½	....	....	....	½	....	....	....
Canning	2	2·88	6·62	5·16	8–9	8–9	6	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Melville	5·55	5·93	3·58	3·70	2·8–3·8	4½–8	7½–8½	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Mosman Park	6	3·53	9	6	9	9	9	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Mundaring	4·74	4·81	4·76	4·76	3–5	6	6	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Nedlands....	3·77	4·62	6·43	6·87	6–8½	5½–8½	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Peppermint Grove	3	3½	4½	6	7	4	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Perth	4·27	3·15	4·28	5·06	3½–8	5–9	3–9	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
South Perth	4·04	5·26	4·90	4·48	5½–7	6–8½	7½–8½	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Swan	3	1½	4·18	4·17	4–6	4–6	4–6	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

* UOV.

PRICES CONTROL.

As to Allowance for Sales Tax Reduction.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Prices:

(1) Has his department any knowledge of the various goods upon which sales tax was reduced in the recent Commonwealth Budget?

(2) Can he assure the public that all of the reductions will be reflected in reduced prices?

(3) Can he assure the public that profit rates previously current will be reduced in relation to the reduction of gross cost to retailers?

(4) Will he consider bringing under price-control all goods on which the whole reduction is not passed on to the public?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, a complete list of new rates is in the Prices Office.

(2) Only so far as controlled goods are concerned.

(3) Yes. Gross profit is only allowed on 8½ per cent. sales tax. Where the sales tax exceeds 8½ per cent., the excess is only added to the price without profit.

(4) Goods and services which are decontrolled are constantly under review.

HEALTH.

As to Handicapped Children and Care of Mothers.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Does the yearly reduction of the number of physically and mentally handicapped children attending Government schools, as shown in table 32 of the report of the Education Department, indicate an improvement in the care of mothers in childbirth since 1939?

(2) Is further research being entered into upon this subject?

(3) Will he use his influence to persuade the organisers of the Coronation Fund for Mothers and Children to apply their funds to the establishment of a research institute to inquire into the problems of childbirth, with particular emphasis upon the "difficult delivery"?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) Variations in the number of physically and mentally handicapped children occur over the years because of the varying prevalence of certain infectious diseases.

The numbers of such handicapped children should fall considerably because of progress in medical knowledge in the last 10 years.

(2) Yes.

(3) The suggestion will be given favourable consideration in conjunction with other propositions put before me.

GOVERNMENT MOTOR CAR SERVICE.

As to Reimbursement to Civil Servants and Cost.

Mr. BRADY asked the Treasurer:

(1) What rate of reimbursement, per mile, is made to civil servants required, or permitted, by the Government to use private cars in the service of the Government?

(2) What is the actual cost per mile of running Government cars in Western Australia in—

(a) the North-West;

(b) country districts;

(c) metropolitan area?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) and (2) An officer employed under the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1904-1950, who is required to maintain a motor car for travelling on official business and who is not in receipt of a commuted amount for travel expenses and the use of his privately-owned vehicle is, for journeys approved by the permanent head, paid hire for such vehicle to cover all expenses in connection therewith in accordance with the following table:—

Area.	Milage Travelled Each Year on Official Business.					
	1–5,000.		5,001-10,000.		Over 10,000.	
	Over 12 h.p.	12 h.p. and under.	Over 12 h.p.	12 h.p. and under.	Over 12 h.p.	12 h.p. and under.
	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.
Metropolitan	9·1	7·4	6·3	5·2	5·3	4·2
South-West Land Division	10·7	8·7	7·9	6·5	6·9	5·5
Other	11·5	9·3	8·7	7·1	7·7	6·1

Provided that where an officer is required to use his own vehicle on official business North of 26 degree South latitude, the following rates shall apply :—

	1–5,000 miles.	Over 5,000 miles.
	Pence per mile.	Pence per mile.
North of 22 deg. South latitude	14	11·3
Between 26 deg. and 22 deg. South latitude	12·3	9·3

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Increased Rates, Margaret River.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What was the capital cost of the Margaret River town water supply?

(2) How much was collected from water rates at Margaret River for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(3) What is the estimated amount to be raised from water rates from the Margaret River scheme for the year ending the 30th June, 1954?

(4) How can he justify increases in water rates of upwards of 400 per cent. (e.g., one ratable property increased from £85 to £317)?

(5) Is he aware that these unwarranted steep increases are causing considerable financial embarrassment to householders generally?

(6) Will he take action immediately to reduce water rates at Margaret River to the level operating prior to the recent increase?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied:

(1) £23,152 6s. 5d.

(2) £1,272 14s. 8d. Water rates and minimum charges.

(3) £2,189 8s. 8d. Water rates and minimum charges.

(4) Valuations have been increased by a total of 72 per cent. consequent on a recent revaluation of ratable property. I am not aware of any one valuation being increased by 400 per cent.

(5) No.

(6) No.

(b) As to Country Towns, Expenditure and Quantities Impounded.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What has been the total expenditure (excluding mere surveys) on public water supplies for each of the following towns to date, viz., Albany, Bridgetown, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Mt. Barker, Tambellup?

(2) As a result, what quantity of water is impounded in such public supplies at the present time at each of the places mentioned?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Total capital expenditure at the 30th June, 1953—

	£
Albany water supply	230,337
Bridgetown water supply	41,588
Gnowangerup water supply	30,025
Cranbrook, Mt. Barker, Tambellup	Nil

(2) Gnowangerup — 1,770,000 gallons. Bridgetown—10,850,000 gallons. Albany Mt. Barker, Tambellup—Nil.

With regard to Albany, it should be noted that the Albany water supply is not an impounded scheme and consequently no water is actually impounded at any time.

(c) As to Visit by Minister.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Further to my question to the Minister for Water Supplies regarding the Margaret River water supply scheme, and in view of the unsatisfactory replies given to it, will he request the Minister to visit Margaret River as soon as possible to discuss this problem with the local residents?

The PREMIER replied:

Whether the replies were unsatisfactory depends upon the point of view.

Mr. Bovell: I should say they were totally unsatisfactory.

The PREMIER: I gathered that. However, on the suggestion by the hon. member, I will have a talk with the Minister for Water Supplies.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Plan for Subiaco Flats.

Hon. V. DONEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is Mr. Krantz's plan for 10-storey flats in Subiaco the only such plan to be studied by him and, presumably, by the Housing Commission?

(2) Were all the members of the commission voluntarily of the opinion—(a) that the Krantz plan was suited to all the special requirements of the Subiaco site; and (b) that competitive plans were unnecessary?

(3) If Mr. Krantz's plan is still acceptable, has any payment yet been made to that gentleman or, otherwise, what, if any, is the official arrangement as between the commission and Mr. Krantz?

(4) Was the Krantz plan submitted at the request of the Government or voluntarily?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes—see answer to No. (4).

(2) (a) Yes; (b) Yes.

(3) No payment has yet been made. The fees will be based on the usual percentage as laid down by the Royal Institute of Architects—in their scale of minimum professional charges—and, in any case, will not exceed that rate based on estimated cost.

(4) As the firm of architects specialise in the design and erection of flats, they were requested to prepare plans.

(b) As to Austrian Prefabricated Homes.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Have all the Austrian prefabricated houses been erected?

(2) If "No" is the answer to No. (1), how many remain in store or on site and in which districts is it proposed to erect them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Forty-eight houses remain in store, and have been allocated to the following districts:—

Killarney—27.
Hilton Park—7.
Wexcombe—14.

All other Austrian houses have either been completed or are under construction.

(c) As to Homes for Aged and Indigent.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the file relating to the representations made to the Commonwealth respecting the housing of the aged and indigent under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

I move—

That the file be laid on the Table of the House for one week.

Question put and passed.

FREMANTLE DISTRICTS FISHERMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

As to Government Assistance.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Has the Government assisted the Fremantle Districts Fishermen's Co-operative Society by way of bank guarantee?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, what is the amount and terms of the guarantee?

(3) In whose favour was the guarantee given?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) Answered by No. (1).

ROADS.

As to Work in Stirling Electorate.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What work has been done or is projected as a result of funds made available by the Main Roads Department during the current financial year on each of the undermentioned roads—

Albany-Lake Grace (via Chester Pass);

Mt. Barker-Frankland river;
Kojonup-Katanning;
Kojonup-Blackwood-rd.;
Gnowangerup-Broomehill?

(2) In what road board districts are the works in each case?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Albany-Lake Grace Road—

	£	£
Albany Road Board	20,000	
Plantagenet Road Board	5,800	
Cranbrook Road Board	4,200	
Gnowangerup Road Board	1,800	
Kent Road Board	750	
Lake Grace Road Board	100	
		32,650
Mt. Barker-Frankland River—		
Plantagenet Road Board	10,550	
Kojonup-Katanning Road—		
Katanning Road Board	7,050	
Kojonup Road Board	1,100	
		8,150
Kojonup-Blackwood Road—		
Kojonup Road Board	9,800	
Upper Blackwood Road Board	13,000	
		22,800
Gnowangerup-Broomehill Road—		
Gnowangerup Road Board	2,000	
Broomehill Road Board	8,300	
		10,300

(2) Answered in No. (1).

DRAINAGE.

As to Scheme for Metropolitan Area.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What progress has been made with the survey for a comprehensive drainage scheme covering the metropolitan area and neighbouring districts?

(2) Is legislation necessary to bring such a scheme under one authority?

(3) If so, would such legislation envisage an overall drainage rating?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The departmental report has only just been completed and the recommendations will be considered as soon as possible.

(2) Yes.

(3) This is being considered.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

As to Rates on State-owned Properties.

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has it been correctly reported that the Government has agreed to pay rates to local governing bodies on all properties owned by the State Government in the various local government areas?

(2) If so, will these rates be payable as from the 1st July, 1953?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The decision made by the Government is not nearly as wide as is suggested by the question. In essence, it is that the Government endorses the principle of paying rates to local governing bodies in relation to dwellinghouses which are owned by the Government. An inter-departmental committee is to be appointed to work out the basis on which this decision will be put into effect. As soon as I am in a position to make further information available, I shall do so.

(2) As to the date of payment of rates to local governing bodies for dwellinghouses, that question has not yet been considered.

EDUCATION.

As to Medical Examination of Children, Carnarvon and Shark Bay.

Mr. NORTON (without notice) asked the Premier:

As it has been necessary to cancel the camp school at Carnarvon owing to an eye infection in that district, is it still the intention of the Education Department to make the medical and dental examinations of the Carnarvon and Shark Bay schools, as would have been done at the camp school?

The PREMIER replied:

As the Minister for Education is in the country today, I am not in a position to answer the question. However, I think that the proposed examination of school children in the areas referred to will be proceeded with in the very near future.

ROYAL SHOW.

As to Adjournment of House.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he indicate what the sitting days will be during Royal Show week?

The PREMIER replied:

The House will not be asked to sit on Wednesday or Thursday in Royal Show week. It will sit on the Tuesday, but no decision has yet been made whether we will meet at 4.30 p.m. or at 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You had better make it 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: I will have consideration given to the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition at the Cabinet meeting to be held next Monday.

BILL—MATRIMONIAL CAUSES AND PERSONAL STATUS CODE AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [2.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [2.36]: I have no intention of calling for a division on the motion, but I am opposed to the Bill, principally for three reasons. Firstly, it contravenes the moral and ethical standards of our religion. Secondly, it is a threat to the sanctity of family life.

The Premier: What has the Leader of the Country Party to say to that?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: If members do not believe in the sanctity of family life, they should stand up and say so. Thirdly, I am opposed to it on the ground of economy, as 80 per cent. of divorces are granted to those people who are in receipt of the basic wage or less. The Bill will further aggravate the demands upon the State by condoning remarriage and incurring commitments for two families that must be provided for. I emphatically oppose the Bill.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.40] in moving the second reading said: When I introduced the other two Bills in connection with the imposition of an entertainments tax, I foreshadowed the measure now before the House. This Bill contains only one amendment and it applies to the definition of the term "entertainment" in the principal Act. Those members who have a copy of the Act before them will follow the amendment very clearly. The purpose of the Bill is simply to exempt the north-west part of Western Australia from the imposition of the entertainments tax. Accordingly, if Parliament approves of this Bill entertainments held in the north-west part of the State will, on and from the 1st October, be completely exempt from payment of entertainments tax.

Mr. Nalder: Where will be the demarcation?

The PREMIER: The demarcation will be the 26th parallel of south latitude. I have no doubt that both Houses of Parliament will approve the legislation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [2.42] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Have you ever had a long one?

Mr. Bovell: A long what ?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is not a long Bill and it should be readily agreed to. The Faculty of Dental Science was founded by the University of Western Australia in 1946. There can be no doubt that the teaching afforded by the University and the Perth Dental Hospital has immeasurably improved the standard of training of our dentists. Modern developments in dentistry require an increasing amount of assistance to the dental surgeon on the part of his staff. Just as the doctor requires the assistance of the trained nurse, so does the modern dentist now require the assistance of highly trained dental nurses.

The position was realised at the dental hospital over four years ago and accordingly the hospital commenced the training of dental nurses at this high level. Recently 14 nurses completed their course and passed their examination. The annual intake of trainees at the dental hospital averages about eight a year. These trained dental nurses are improving the standard of the work at the hospital and there is an increasing demand for their services in private dental practice. A request was made last year by Professor Radden and Mr. Campbell, the medical superintendent of the Perth Dental Hospital, that the training and registration of these dental nurses be done under the control of the Nurses Registration Board.

At present this board controls the training and the registration of general nurses, midwives, mental nurses, tuberculosis nurses, mothercraft nurses and nursing aides. The board sought and obtained the opinion of the Dental Association, which was favourable. The board has considered this matter and, after an inspection and examination of the hospital and the training, approves of the proposal. Though the Bill is small it is an important one. Dental nurses are very

highly qualified for their work and they have been doing a wonderful job. If a dentist does not desire to employ one of these trained nurses, it is not incumbent upon him to do so; he may employ whom he desires whether the nurse is trained or otherwise. This will not interfere with the small dentists who perhaps cannot afford to pay a trained nurse. There will be no compulsion at all on the small dentist to employ a trained nurse.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What will be the distinction?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The distinction will be that the untrained person will not be able to wear the badge of the trained nurse.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What will the badge be?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are you going to prevent the other girl from wearing a cap or an apron or something else?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know. I have been told what it is, but I have forgotten. As I have already said these nurses are very highly trained and their standard of training is comparable with that of any other nurse. I have also been informed that we meet a very fine class of girl among these nurses. The only thing is that their numbers may not last very long because being such charming people, they will be grabbed up by the dentists and doctors, and they will, in that event, get married. Consequently we may not get the service from them which we desire.

Mr. Hutchinson: Did you get the opinion of the Dental Nurses' Association?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Oh yes. The association agreed to this.

Mr. McCulloch: We could do it without its approval.

Mr. Hutchinson: The Government could do anything.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH : This has been approved by the Nurses Registration Board. As I have said, at the present time the board controls the training and registration of general nurses, midwives, mental nurses, t.b. nurses, mothercraft nurses and nursing aides. The dental nurses will be added to that group. I cannot say more about it, but would add that it is highly commendable that these people should be trained under very strict supervision, and that proposal has been approved by the board.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Where did the demand come from? Who suggested it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This matter goes back to the period when the former Government was in office.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Who has asked for it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Th dentists themselves. The supply of dents nurses has been exhausted and the troubl is that we are not able to get a sufficier number of nurses to replenish the supply But under this system it will not be ver long before we will be able to cater for th requirements of the State. The trainin mentioned is a very useful one and, as have explained, it is not mandatory fc dentists to engage trained nurses if not i a position to do so. But from what I hav learnt myself, it appears that dentists ar very keen to engage these nurses and the are just as important to the dentists s medical nurses are to the doctors. move—

That the Bill be now read a secon time.

On motion by Mr. Hutchinson, debat adjourned.

BILL—COLLIE-GRIFFIN MINE RAILWAY.

Message.

Message from the Governor received an read recommending appropriation for th purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hor H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.50] i moving the second reading said: This i a Bill to constitute the line from Colli railway station to the Griffin mine a Gov ernment railway. In 1928, following a re quest from the Griffin Mining Coy. Ltd the Government of the day agreed to con struct a railway from Collie station to th new Griffin mine in order to assist th company in its operations. An agreemen was entered into on the 31st August, 1928 The company proposed to advance £15,00 to be held by the Treasurer until revenu from the line produced, in addition t working expenses, maintenance, repairs t and depreciation of rollingstock and plan used on the line and the actual expendi ture on the construction of the line with interest thereon at 5 per cent. per annum

The Treasurer agreed to accept a de posit of £5,000 in cash, which was lodge at the Commercial Bank, and an assign ment of uncalled capital on 10,000 £ shares in the company. Interest accruin on the deposit of £5,000 was to be paid t the company except to the extent that th revenue from the line did not meet th operating costs mentioned. When the cos of the line, plus interest, had been re couped from the surplus revenue, th securities were to be returned to the com pany. Coal purchased by the Railway De partment and carried over the line was t be brought into account in determinin the earnings. The line was completed and operations commenced on the 18th June 1929.

Following representations from the company, the Treasurer refunded £4,750 of the fixed deposit to the company on the 12th September, 1930, and received in lieu 5,000 £1 shares paid up to 3d. per share, bringing the number of shares held to 15,000 over the uncalled amount for which a debenture was held. By deed of release, dated the 25th October, 1934, after further communications from the company, the amount representing the cost of construction on which interest was to be computed, was reduced from £23,231 to £9,000 and later the shares and balance of the deposit of £250 were returned to the company. For a number of years the line showed a surplus, but later revenue was not sufficient to meet outgoings and the company was called upon to pay the difference, which, up to December, 1948, amounted to £7,842.

In 1949 the company opened negotiations with a view to acquiring the mine siding, but during the course of these discussions doubt was cast on the application of that portion of the original agreement which referred to the making good of the deficiency in revenue from the line. Crown Law advised that the company could not be charged with this deficiency, plus interest, as had been done, as the agreement provided that this recovery could be effected only from, and to the extent of, the interest accruing on the fixed deposit. In addition, the agreement did not provide for depreciation on the line which had been included in working costs. After allowing for interest which would have accumulated and been available for meeting the deficiency had the fixed deposit not been refunded, it was clear that the company had overpaid in the vicinity of £4,800.

After discussions with the previous Government, the company agreed that if the sidings in the immediate vicinity of the mine comprising about 57 chains were transferred to it, a claim would not be made for a refund of the amount overpaid. The sidings were valued at £2,200. Executive Council approval was given on the 20th February, 1953, to this proposal. The balance of the railway, 2 miles 55 chains, was to be taken over by the Railways Commission and the Griffin Coy. would pay the commission annual charges computed on the usual basis for all siding holders who have a connection with the main railway system. The Treasury and Railways Commission have agreed that the amount to be taken into railway accounts for the 2 miles 55 chains should be £6,800 as mentioned in the Bill.

Although the railway has always been Government property, it has not been a railway constructed under the authority of a special Act in accordance with the provisions of Section 96 of the Public Works Act, 1902-1950. This Bill will remedy that position and will enable the commission to operate it under the Railways Act as any other section of railway. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS AND FERRIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.56] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the Act in two directions. The first amendment concerns Section 26 which was originally Section 12 of Act No. 58 of 1912. The intention of that section was that whatever rights of action arose in connection with the running of the service, they should be brought against the management and not against the operatives, within six months of the cause of action arising. The limitation was enacted so that the management would have a reasonable chance of investigating the claim. Some cases have occurred where, the claim against the management being barred by the lapse of six months, the claimant has sued and obtained judgment against the driver personally and the management has felt obliged to pay. Section 27 provides that no action shall be maintained unless it is commenced within six months.

Within recent months astute lawyers have on two occasions defeated the object by successfully sueing tramway drivers who, as servants, are held in law to be equally as responsible as the body corporate, but are not protected in the matter of limitation of time. The general manager is caused to meet the damage and costs of the servant and thus the intention of the legislature in protecting the Crown is nullified. At this stage I would point out that claims under Section 26 do not include those under third party risk provisions. They are claims other than those, and do not in any way infringe third party claims under motor insurance.

Hon. D. Brand: Could you give us an indication of what the claims are?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A score of claims could arise. A collision may occur between vehicles, and there may be some damage done by a vehicle. As stated previously, the original intention was that anyone who considered himself to have a claim should make that claim within a period of six months. Having failed to lodge a claim within that period the individual concerned was not able to sue the tramway department, the body corporate. But as there was no provision in the Act regarding the employees of the department a claimant could, after the lapse of six months, sue an employee,

and if he obtained judgment in his favour the Tramway Department felt morally bound to pay the damages involved.

There is no intention to interfere with the right of any person to claim against a driver or against the department, though perhaps I should exclude the driver. The original provision in the Act is that claims must be made within six months, but under this Bill it is proposed to exclude the right to prosecute an individual such as an employee if the claim is not made within six months.

The other amendment provides that where damage is done to an article that is being carried by a passenger, perhaps even through the negligence of the department or of an employee, unless a charge has been made for its carriage, there can be no claim for compensation. To give a case in point, a passenger on a tram might be carrying a valuable ornament such as a crystal vase worth perhaps £40 or £50. At present there is no exemption for the department.

Hon. D. Brand: Has there ever been a prosecution?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You must be thinking of the prams that are carried.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not; I do not think along the same lines as does the hon. member. This amendment refers to damage to a valuable article being carried by a passenger.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are you prepared to exempt baby-prams?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member thinks they should be exempt, I suggest that he should give notice of an amendment. No charge is made for the carrying of a pram on the back of a tram-car or bus, and therefore I consider that the department should not be responsible for any damage sustained. The department does not receive a fee for carrying a pram; that is a concession granted to the passenger.

Mr. Hutchinson: Can you give us any idea of the number of claims paid by the department every year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Members of the Opposition, by asking for details on matters of little value to anyone, are involving the Government in much cost.

Hon. D. Brand: Your party last year and the year before did quite a lot of that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We cannot have the whole of the office staff of the tramways working as the staff of the Railway Department has been doing to get out information for members, and I am not prepared to have it done. Whether there have been claims in the past has no bearing on the question. We are endeavouring now to provide against the possibility of claims being made in future. If a passenger were carrying a crystal vase and an accident occurred such as a collision with another vehicle and the vase were broken, should the department have to pay for the article? No freight charge is made for the carriage of an article in those circumstances. All that the department receives is the passenger's fare. The department is responsible simply for the safety of the passenger.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think you would be responsible.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member showed abysmal ignorance when the Firearms and Guns Bill was under discussion.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not be rude! I was right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not prepared to accept the hon. member as an authority, notwithstanding the line in which he has been trained. I consider that the Crown Law authorities are more highly qualified than he is, and they consider that there could be a claim. I am prepared to take their opinion rather than that of the hon. member.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: For a valuable vase worth £40?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What is wrong with that?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I doubt whether the department would be responsible.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Crown Law officers, who hold higher qualifications than does the hon. member, say that it could be responsible.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It would be responsible?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is what I want to know.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Crown Law officers advised the Tramway Department to endeavour to protect itself, because no charge is levied for an article carried by a passenger. The department has no desire to evade its responsibilities in the matter of an injury being sustained by a passenger. It receives a fee for carrying the passenger, and if it can be shown that a passenger is injured as a result of negligence on the part of the department or of an employee, it is liable. In the case of an article being carried by a passenger for which no fee has been paid, the department says—and I think rightly so—that it should not be liable if a person falls as a result, for instance, of a sudden stop or start or some misdemeanour on the part of an employee. Those are the only two amendments contained in the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Oldfield, debate adjourned.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [3.9] in moving the second reading said: Under this measure eight amendments are proposed to the Act of 1918-51. All of them except one merely seek to remedy some legal difficulty or establish a position, minor in character, that has been overlooked by previous Governments in respect of the Act itself. The law at present provides for the Agriculture Protection Board to nominate and declare a commissioner to act as the board of a district and administer the Act in cases where the powers and functions of the board are suspended or the board is abolished.

Prior to 1950, the Act provided for the Minister to undertake this work, but with the passing of the Act in that year it was transferred to the Agriculture Protection Board. Unfortunately, although the 1951 amendment appointed a commissioner to undertake the duties in certain circumstances, it made no provision for him to receive a salary. That was an oversight on the part of the Government, and the Bill seeks to rectify it.

The most important provision in the measure involves a big principle regarding the rating of certain lands according to their position in the outer or buffer areas because of the degree of protection which they give to the more favoured areas behind them. I am not referring to agricultural lands generally, but purely to the pastoral country as we know it. Under Section 59 there is power to levy rates. The Act provides for pastoral holdings to have a maximum rate of 1s. and a minimum of ½d. for every 100 acres of land held and for non-pastoral holdings a maximum of 2d. and a minimum of ½d. for each £ of unimproved capital value.

The Bill does not propose to alter either the method, or the maximum or minimum rates as they apply to the non-pastoral areas, but simply to rectify an injustice which, in my opinion, has always been present in regard to the buffer areas. These areas, from a vermin point of view, act as a solid buffer for those behind them, and, due to their unimproved value, or the district in which they are situated, they pay far more by way of vermin rates than they should; and much more, in some cases, than do the more favoured lands immediately behind them.

Members will notice that the present rating is on an acreage basis only. This method has proved unfair on numerous occasions, and because of that we are seeking to alter the system from an acreage to an unimproved capital value basis. This will bring, in the main, pastoral and non-pastoral holdings into line so far as the method of rating is concerned. We propose a maximum of 9d. and a minimum of ½d. for each £ of unimproved capital value, and this is written into the Bill. The vermin boards will have a reasonably wide choice, therefore, as to the degree of rates which they propose to strike. They will be able to arrange their rating so that whilst they can lessen the severity of the tax in the outer areas, they will receive in the total, approximately the same income that they do now.

This is quite an important principle and one that has not been admitted before, but there is no reason why we should not tackle it if we know it to be right. Before coming to the House today I asked for figures in connection with this matter so that I could show members, by comparison, how the proposition will affect some areas. I do not propose to go through the lot, but I have taken at random a couple which will give members a chance of understanding how the proposition will work.

Two pastoral leases of comparable size, but different unimproved capital values have been taken. Moorarie is an inner area property and comprises 340,000 acres, valued at 13s. per acre. Koonmarra is an outer area property, comprising 342,000 acres but valued at only 6s. 6d. per acre. Under the present system, and using a rate of 2½d. for every 100 acres, the property which is only worth half as much is paying a few shillings more in vermin tax than the other. The new taxes, based on the unimproved capital value would be as follows:—

> Moorarie, comprising 340,000 acres, which paid £35 8s. 4d. tax at 2½d. per 100 acres would now pay £45 16s. 9d. if based on 2½d. in the £ of the unimproved capital value of £4,400.
>
> Koonmarra, comprising 342,000 acres, which paid £35 12s. 6d. tax at 2½d. per 100 acres would now pay £23 2s. 6d. if based on 2½d. in the £ of the unimproved capital value of £2,220.

From these examples members will realise that if the rating is changed in accordance with the Bill, it will have the result of reversing the amount of tax paid in the various pastoral districts according to whether they are situated in the outer or buffer areas, or in the more valuable parts comprising the hinterland of those places, where it is considered they would be better able to pay the additional tax. This is believed to be a fairer proposition.

The parent Act contains no power, as far as I can see, to prevent a vermin board from differentiating between various parts of its district. As a consequence it would be possible for such a board to so arrange its rating that it could retain for itself approximately what it has received hitherto, and yet see that the burden which is falling heavily on the outer areas was pushed on to the shoulders where some of it rightfully belongs. Whilst the

figures I have just read out in connection with two stations would differ with respect to other stations, they do explain to some extent the principle involved in the suggestion that the unimproved capital value shall be considered as the medium of taxation for vermin destruction, rather than that it shall be on an acreage basis.

When I was a member of the Royal Commission that inquired into the vermin question some eight years ago, a feature of the evidence that we received in a great many places was the unfair effect that a general rating system has on pastoral areas of that discription when it is strictly on a flat acreage basis. This measure will completely reverse the position and, if handled properly—as I have no doubt it will be by the vermin boards—should enable fair play to exist in those areas as far as the taxing for the destruction of vermin is concerned.

It is proposed also that a new subsection be added at the end of Section 59. It has been found in the past that where a maximum vermin rate is struck in a district, even though it has been carefully considered by all the officers concerned, it has proved to be insufficient to deal with the vermin problem over a given period. There may be a tremendous infestation of vermin at any time and in any part of the State. In the past, vermin boards have frequently, with the best intentions, struck a vermin rate only to find it completely insufficient for the work to be done, and there is no provision in the parent Act for any elasticity in that regard. The Bill, therefore, contains provision that a vermin board shall be given power, provided it can prove its case to the Agriculture Protection Board which, in turn, can obtain the approval of the Minister, to increase the maximum rate if that is found to be desirable and necessary.

The Act makes provision for an inspector or authorised person, on production of his authority, if demanded by an owner, to enter a holding for the purposes of the Act. It provides also that the inspector or other person should draw up and sign a report as the result of that visit to and entry on the property and the search which followed. Government inspectors are required under the Act to furnish reports to the Agriculture Protection Board and inspectors appointed by vermin boards are instructed to report back to those boards.

While the Act provides for other authorised persons, in addition to those officers, to undertake that work of inspection and research, it contains no power for them to make reports, and consequently, when such an authorised person, who might be the only one to enter upon and inspect a property, would otherwise be enabled to furnish a report which could be used as evidence in the case of a prosecution, he is at present unable to do so. It seems silly to appoint a person for this work unless we have an opportunity of receiving from him a report which may be used if necessary.

At the present time, it is necessary for the Agriculture Protection Board, or a vermin board, to specify by notice in the "Government Gazette" the date upon which owners or occupiers shall destroy vermin on their properties, and the means to be adopted to that end. That notice has to be published also in a newspaper not less than four weeks prior to the specified date. It is usual to serve that notice by the hand of an inspector or authorised person but, according to the Crown Law Department, there is a legal doubt whether that is the proper procedure and whether those people can actually do the job, because the present wording of the Act provides for the notice to be served by either the chairman of the Agriculture Protection Board or the chairman of a vermin board.

In order to overcome the legal doubt that I have mentioned, it is proposed to include the words "by an inspector or authorised person" in the appropriate place, as set out in the Bill. The only other matter I desire to deal with, as members will have ample opportunity of studying the Bill, is the question of penalties. From my own experience and observation over the years, it has become apparent to me that a number of vermin boards and local authorities refuse to undertake prosecutions because there is no certainty that a culprit, if prosecuted, will be sufficiently punished. While the maximum penalty laid down in the Act is £50—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much loud conversation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: —there is no minimum provided, and the general opinion—it is borne out by the facts and by court cases—is that the maximum fine in such proceedings is frequently only £1 or £2. The boards are therefore most reluctant to go to the trouble of prosecuting when they know that the penalty imposed will probably be of that order.

In the Bill, in order to assist as far as possible the work the vermin boards are doing—they are doing an excellent job under difficult conditions—it is provided that for a first offence the maximum penalty shall be not more than £50 or less than £5. The maximum penalty is not increased for subsequent offences, but the minimum is increased to £10, and there is provision for a fine of £1 per day if the offence is a continuing one. That might seem severe but those living in the country and members representing rural areas know the difficulties of the vermin boards which have to enforce the Act in their own areas, because under that legislation the onus of vermin destruction is still on the farmer and it is sometimes diffi-

cult to compel such people to undertake the work of destroying vermin on their own properties.

Even where the board has a clear-cut case and the offender has been warned time after time but takes no notice, when he is eventually brought before the court the penalty imposed is very often only a £1 fine, and that does nothing to assist the boards or help in the eradication of vermin. Although the penalties proposed in the Bill appear to be severe, I think that is necessary to enable us to do the work we are endeavouring to carry out throughout the State. We are actually asking no more than the Victorian Government is prepared to do in that State. The only difference between its legislation and ours in this regard is that in Victoria the maximum penalty, in the case of subsequent offences, is increased to £100, as against the £50 suggested in this Bill. I commend the measure to the House and refer particularly to the clause relating to the change in the policy on rating which I think, if properly understood and implemented, will ensure some sort of justice in places that have never known it previously. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [3.30]: In speaking to this measure, which was introduced by the Minister for Agriculture the other evening, I want to discuss a few points so that members may fully understand exactly what is contained in the Bill. The Minister said that some breeders, whose pigs had had to be destroyed, had experienced difficulty when claiming compensation. He said that some breeders had difficulty in receiving forms from the department in sufficient time to enable them to be filled in, returned and compensation claimed. Under the present Act the period allowed is 21 days, but by this amendment the Minister proposes to extend the period to 90 days.

I am of the opinion that the time should be extended, but I think that the amendment suggested by the Minister is almost ridiculous. The Act has been in force for some 10 or 11 years and up till now it has not been found necessary to extend the time beyond the 21 days. The Minister said that recently cases were reported to him where some breeders had been delayed in connection with the lodging of claims for a period far beyond the 21 days allowed, and special letters had to be sent to enable the Minister to decide the merits of each case. The Minister had to consider the points put forward and then decide whether he would grant an extension of time. At present the time allowed is 21 days or three weeks and it is proposed to extend that period to 90 days or 13 weeks, and, in my opinion, such an extension is absolutely unnecessary. If the period were doubled and made 42 days, it would give a breeder in any part of the State ample time to make an application to the Department of Agriculture, have the forms completed, returned and the compensation paid.

Mr. Andrew: What harm is there in it?

Mr. NALDER: I think a period of 90 days would only lead to abuse of the Act.

Mr. J. Hegney: You could breed a pig in that time.

Mr. NALDER: Yes, it would be almost possible for a man to breed another pig in the period of 90 days. Therefore I think it is absolutely unnecessary to extend the period as has been suggested by the Minister and he failed to convince me, when he introduced the measure, that this extra time is necessary. The Minister said that the extra time was required to cover those breeders who lived in the remote parts of the State.

I should say that the majority of pigs produced in Western Australia are to be found within at most a 200-mile radius of the metropolitan area. A few might be bred as far north as Northampton and as far south as Albany, and perhaps as far east as Kalgoorlie, but not very many. While thinking about this measure I remembered that pigs are being bred at Glenroy station, but I doubt whether the owners of that property would need to submit applications for compensation for pigs destroyed by any disease. Although I have not the information available, I think it will be found that the biggest percentage of applications for compensation come from breeders within a radius of 25 miles of the Perth Town Hall.

Information made available to us a few years ago proved that this was the position and therefore I cannot see the necessity for such an extension of time to enable breeders to obtain forms and fulfil the requirements of the Act. I do not consider the House would be justified in agreeing to the amendment because 42 days should be ample time in which to enable breeders to make application to the Minister and, if necessary, state reasons why they required an extension beyond that period. However, I do not think many cases would come within that category.

Hon. D. Brand: You do not think that there has been any pressure from anywhere as regards this proposal?

Mr. NALDER: That might be the reason, but I have not heard of it. However, I think the Minister would be well advised to look into this aspect and give considera-

tion to the points I have raised. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I intend to move an amendment to reduce the period from 90 to 42 days because I think that is quite sufficient. The Act has been in operation for some time and has been well received by breeders throughout the State, although I think the measure definitely favours breeders who live in close proximity to the metropolitan area. I do not regard it as possible for a man who lives, say, 200 miles from the city to be able to claim compensation, except on rare occasions, because when a pig dies it decomposes so quickly that it would be impossible to obtain the services of an inspector from the city within the necessary period. By the time the inspector arrived it would not be possible for him to find out exactly what the trouble was or what disease had caused the death of the animal.

I am sure that most applications for compensation are made by breeders who live in the vicinity of the metropolitan area. That adds weight to my argument that it is unnecessary to extend the time allowed for applications. I oppose the Bill in its present form and I trust that the Minister will agree to an amendment along the lines I have suggested. If the period of time is extended to 90 days it will not increase the efficiency of the Act, but rather will it tend to make breeders lax.

Sitting suspended from 3.40 to 4.2 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [4.2]: I understand from the member for Katanning's remarks that he does not approve of the proposed 90 day period. In fact, he described it as ridiculous. It is not at all ridiculous. It was only after a great deal of thought and study by departmental officers concerned that the recommendation was made. After all, it is those officers associated with the inquiries that must be made and with the analyses that must be obtained—as the result of the death of a pig—who would be more pleased, I should imagine, than anyone else to receive at the earliest possible moment the applications of those seeking compensation.

It was not the pig breeders, or the Farmers' Union, or anyone else connected with that side of the business that proposed this amendment to the Act, but the departmental officers themselves, who felt that 90 days was the very minimum period necessary in many circumstances to overcome the problem which it was found impossible to solve under the old 21-day period.

Mr. Nalder: Has that occurred only in the last few months?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What?

Mr. Nalder: The reason for the extension of the period from 21 days to 90 days.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is one of those matters which, as is the case with other Acts, grows up over a long period until it becomes intolerable, and then someone seeks an amendment. During my remarks in moving the second reading of the Bill, I referred to a case where 76 pigs died of para-typhoid and the total cost was £545. By no stretch of imagination could anybody have submitted an application in that instance within the prescribed period.

Mr. Ackland: Where were they?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: From memory, I cannot say. I had no idea that I would have to take further part in the debate on this issue. I do not know where they came from originally, but they were in Perth.

Mr. Ackland: If they came to the sale in Perth—

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; they had to be destroyed—76 of them, to the value of £545.

Mr. Ackland: The compensation was claimed before they were slaughtered?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The point I am trying to explain is that under the Act 21 days, in certain circumstances, represent insufficient time for a man who seeks compensation to submit his application. When a pig is destroyed, the departmental officers immediately send the owner a claim form.

Mr. Ackland: What we are trying to get at is this: If a pig comes to Perth and is sold, it is no longer owned by the man who consigned it to Perth. It is then the property of the one who purchased it and he is on the spot.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE; It does not matter to me who claims the compensation. I know all that. What I am trying to establish in the minds of the member for Moore, and the member for Katanning who raised objections to the proposed 90 days, is that in the particular case I mentioned it would have been impossible for the man concerned, whoever he was, to submit an application form in time, because it was long after three weeks before the officers of the department were able satisfactorily to diagnose the complaint, and it has been laid down by our department on many occasions—

Mr. Nalder: If that was the case, the date the compensation should be claimed would be when the officers diagnosed the complaint. You say it took three weeks.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: According to the Act, it does not apply from that date; the hon. member must know that. The proposed amendment to the Act endeavours to overcome that situation. The departmental officers say, and I believe it is true, that in most cases—in possibly 90 per cent.—applications are

received within the prescribed period of 21 days. There is not any difficulty about that; but where delay occurs is in those cases where there is great difficulty in diagnosing the cause of death, through no fault of the farmer at all. As a result of their experience the departmental officers say that nothing under 90 days is sufficient, and they are the ones who should know.

Consequently, I hope that in Committee the hon. member will not press his proposed amendment. I do not think he has gone into the matter sufficiently because the proposal is not ridiculous. It is based on good commonsense and experience over a number of years. If there is one thing more than any other that the officers concerned do not want to do, it is to throw a burden on the farmers concerned. As it is now, it is only by stretching the imagination that a number of people can receive compensation, and it is only by appealing direct to the Minister that they are paid.

From the experience gained in specific cases, one of which I have mentioned—and there are others—I think the hon. member should agree that I provided sufficient information in my second reading speech for him to understand why the proposed amendment to the Act is so necessary. It is not my amendment; it is one suggested by the officers concerned with this industry. Their experience is that if we are to be sure of our ground the time must not be cut too short. It should not be 26 days or 42 days but a sufficient length of time for the department to do its job and enable the farmers concerned to receive application forms in time. This Bill provides for that, and I think it is entirely necessary.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 9 amended:

Mr. NALDER: Notwithstanding the reply of the Minister, I am not satisfied. He told us that where a breeder took more than 21 days to lodge his application for compensation, he wrote to the Minister giving his reasons for exceeding the time, and the Minister agreed to payment of the compensation. In the circumstances, I see no reason why the same procedure could not be followed in future as the Minister would still decide upon the genuineness of the case. A shorter period than 90 days would give some assurance that there would be no risk of laxity or abuse. I move an amendment—

> That in line 13 of proposed new paragraph (b) the word "ninety" be struck out with a view to inserting another word in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Committee should not accept the amendment. The hon. member might wish to make the period seven days.

Hon. D. Brand: He indicated 42 days in his second reading speech.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but he might have changed his mind since afternoon tea. I have explained the necessity for stipulating 90 days. There would be provision for the Minister to come into the picture after 21 days, as he must approve of all claims for compensation lodged after that period. I cannot see why the hon. member should object. The period of 90 days was adopted only after much thought, and if the hon. member has in mind the insertion of 42 days, I can inform him that it was not adopted because it was deemed to be insufficient. The officers of the department know far more about the matter than we do, and we would be showing weakness if we arbitrarily agreed to a lesser period in opposition to their experience. Nobody would suffer by making the period 90 days.

Mr. NALDER: I assure the Minister that the afternoon tea made no difference to my idea as to what the period should be. I suggest 42 days, which would be double the provision in the Act.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would not be sufficient.

Mr. NALDER: I think it would be ample. The Minister has tried to cover up for the department without giving sufficient reasons.

Hon. D. BRAND: I support the amendment. The Minister has defended the recommendation of the departmental officers for a period of 90 days, and I am wondering why in the first place they recommended 21 days, which is now said to be too short. The officers might have taken the view, "Let us make sure", and so there would be a prolonging of the period for the cleaning up of claims. It would be interesting to know the percentage of cases that have to be submitted to the Minister. A jump from 21 days to 90 days might tend to slow up the process of dealing with those cases, and 42 days should be a reasonable period. It is pleasing to note that the Minister is prepared to take the word of departmental officers without question, because I recall that a certain member, when sitting on this side, was not always prepared to accept their word as being near the mark.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	19
Majority against	3

Ayes.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
	(Teller.)

Noes.	
Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
Mr. Lawrence	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.	
Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Thorn	Mr. Heal
Mr. Yates	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Tonkin
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Hawke
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nulsen

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.25] in moving the second reading said: Before I proceed with an outline of the Bill I would, on this, the occasion of my first introducing a Bill as a Minister of the Crown, like to express my keen appreciation of the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman and his co-workers.

I would also like to show in advance my appreciation of the Government officers who have been, and will be, responsible for the drafting of this and similar Bills. One does not realise the value of these men in the Public Service until one actually has the need to submit proposals to them so that the appropriate Bills can be drafted. I have nothing but admiration for the great work done by the officers to whom I have referred. If in the future members criticise the drafting of any Bill I introduce, I shall not throw the blame on to these officers, but will accept it myself.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They do an excellent job.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I quite agree. I thought it would not be out of order if I expressed my appreciation at this early stage. To proceed with the Bill, I may say that all members have a comprehensive grasp of the early history of the State Government Insurance Office Act. The office was established in 1926, and it proceeded for some years on a more or less illegal basis. Between 1926 and 1938 a number of attempts were made —all I think by Labour Administrations— to have legal status granted to the State Government Insurance Office.

In 1938 that objective was accomplished. In those days the office was confined to dealing with employers' liability insurance and administering the State Government Insurance Office fund. In 1943, and again in 1945, its scope was extended to cover all classes of insurable risks in connection with the ownership and use of motor vehicles, and insurances ordinarily required by local authorities and friendly societies; and also so that it could act as local agent for the State insurance offices of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

The State office, of course, administers the Government fire, marine and general insurance fund, and the workers' compensation fund. I am in accord with the view that insurance circles, generally, realise that employers' liability and motor vehicle insurance are two of the least profitable fields in the insurance world. The State Government Insurance Office, however, has from a humble beginning developed into a sound financial institution. It has made a material contribution to the Treasury, and its premiums have always been kept at the lowest possible figure. Under the Government marine, fire and general insurance fund, and the local authorities' pools, every type of insurable risk—insurable by any office other than a life office—is underwritten by the State Insurance Office. During 1951-52 the marine insurance premiums amounted to some £48,000. It will be generally admitted that the State office has developed the necessary experience to participate in all forms of insurance business.

I do not like quoting extensive figures because they become rather monotonous, but I would like to mention a few to demonstrate to members just how the State Government Insurance Office has developed. The office could not have developed had it not been for the conscientious work and efficiency demonstrated by the manager and all employees in the office. One has only to go to the insurance office and have any dealings with a responsible officer there and one will realise why the State Insurance Office is held in such high esteem in the business and general community of Western Australia and, indeed, with all people who have any dealings with it.

The following figures reflect the growth and the financial strength of the office, the desire to seek its service and the continuing public confidence. For the first year of operations, in 1926-27, the workers'

compensation, general accident only, premium income was £23,725 while the premium income for that class of insurance business for 1952-53 amounted to £253,400. For the motor vehicle comprehensive insurance in 1943-44, the first year of operation in that type of business, the premium income was £4,115 and in 1952-53 it had risen to £79,000.

Another interesting branch of insurance is the local authorities' pool, and this class of business was first established in 1946-47. In that year the premium income was £2,150 and in 1952-53 it had risen to £16,750. As regards the Government fire, marine and general insurance fund, in 1927-28 the premium income was £21,200 and in 1952-53 it amounted to £94,000. I am quoting round figures.

During the period that I have mentioned, substantial reserves have been created and at the 30th June, 1953, they were covered by the following activities or cash balances:—

	£
Commonwealth inscribed stock	1,310,000
Local authorities loans .	11,500
Fixed deposit at the Treasury ..	240,000
State Housing Commission	170,000
Miscellaneous	47,600
Land in St. George's Terrace	30,500

That land, owned by the State Government Insurance Office, is in St. George's Terrace not far from the corner of King-st. and near the Queensland Insurance Office building. In addition to the items I have quoted, there is a cash balance at the bank of £80,992, and this makes a grand total of £1,891,000. In connection with the Government fire, marine and general insurance fund, there is Commonwealth inscribed stock worth £89,100 and the cash balance at the Treasury is £109,400. Those figures show the development of the State Government Insurance Office over the years.

The office has also accepted the responsibility of building a nine-storey edifice on the land it owns in St. George's Terrace. This land is in a central part of the city and one could almost say that it is in the heart of the business centre of Perth. The approximate estimated cost of that projected building is £350,000 and it is hoped that a start on its construction will be made early next year. It is expected that the building will be completed within two and a half years of its commencement. Without specifying any of the Government instrumentalities which might occupy offices in that building when finished, I might mention that such departments as the Wyndham Meat Works, the Factories and Shops Department, the Workers' Compensation Board and others will probably be housed there.

Last evening the member for Claremont asked the Premier certain questions as to Government office accommodation, but as can be seen, this building, when completed, will, to a certain extent, relieve the intense congestion which exists at present in that respect. Of course, because of the limited loan funds available to the Government, it would have been quite a time before the Government of the day, this Government or any future Government—and I know it would have been very awkward for the last Government—could have indulged in any extensive office construction.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Who is going to build it? Have you any idea?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Not yet. Tenders are in the process of being called and the question of who is to build it, and under what conditions it will be built, will be decided within the next few months. I would also like to indicate the position regarding the local authorities' pool. This particular class of insurance demonstrates the popularity of the State Government Insurance Office with the local governing bodies. In 1946, the first year of operation of the local authorities' pool, 60 local authorities participated and at that time, if I recollect aright, the premiums were approximately 20 per cent. below the tariff rates. I have obtained the figures as at the 30th June, 1953, and I find that 119 local authorities, out of a total of 146 in this State, conduct their business, in connection with the local authorities' pool, with the State Insurance Office.

In the aggregate £7,500 has been rebated to the local authorities and a sum of £6,500 has been placed to the office reserve account. I would like members to keep in mind the fact that that is the net sum after the requisite taxation has been paid as well as fire brigade charges, claims and administration costs. The pool has proved beneficial to the State and the ratepayers of the local authorities concerned.

Let me turn for a moment to the position in the other States where Governments have established State insurance offices, and I refer particularly to Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. In those States Government instrumentalities participate in practically all classes of insurance and, with the exception of Tasmania, they carry on life assurance business also. I have had inquiries made as to the relationship between the State Government offices in those States and the private insurance companies. I am pleased to say that while those State instrumentalities are not actually members of the association, they work in close harmony with the private insurance offices. If the Parliament of Western Australia will give its entire blessing to this measure, as I hope it will, there is no reason why the same happy relations cannot exist between

the State Government Insurance Office and the various private insurance offices in this State.

What I am going to say now is not meant to be in the form of a threat. I merely give it to the House for what it is worth, but I believe in all sincerity that there is some substance in the remarks I am going to make. I admit, though, that it has not occurred since 1946. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, the Commonwealth has the necessary power and authority to engage in various forms of insurance business, including life assurance. I must repeat that this is not meant to be used as a threat, but I suggest, again in all sincerity, that the time is not far distant when, if the Parliament of Western Australia continues to refuse to enable the State Insurance Office to carry on comprehensive business in regard to insurance, then the Commonwealth will undoubtedly set up an office in this State.

Once again I will repeat that this is not meant to be a threat. The time may come, however, when we shall find—and I have no hesitation in saying that if a Labour Government were on the Commonwealth Treasury bench it would do it —that in a very short time the necessary organisation in this State would be set up to carry on general types of insurance business. The question I pose is merely: Would we prefer a Commonwealth office to be established here or would we like to see our own concern, a purely Western Australian concern, inaugurated, with authority to indulge in all types of insurance business?

I suggest it would be in the interests of this State for the State Insurance Office to be given the requisite authority to enable it to indulge in the various types of insurance, including life insurance, to which I have referred. If that is done, I have no doubt, as I said earlier, that the relationships that exist between Government offices in other States and private insurance companies there, would be similarly harmonious here.

Next I propose to outline briefly a few of the main provisions of the Bill. It will be readily understood that a few of the clauses relate to general machinery matters and measures for the general administration and amendment of the concern if Parliament eventually decides to expand it. To give a few illustrations: It is proposed to alter the definition of "manager" to that of "general manager." The reason for this is that a number of branches are envisaged, and it will be necessary to appoint branch managers. There will also be a machinery clause for the protection of the employment of permanent officers, including those who are now employed in the State Insurance Office or any other member of the Public Service who may be transferred to the office from another department. All their rights should be preserved and power and authority will be given to the manager to appoint people on a temporary or casual basis, such as assessors or adjusters, and so on. All that is provided for in the Bill.

Members will understand that I am only Minister for the time being. The Minister under the present Act is regarded as the body corporate, and he can sue and be sued. It is suggested, and I agree, that the Minister is not the proper person in this case, but the office should be the body corporate, and provision is made in the Bill for that purpose. There is provision in the present Act—I mention this for the benefit of members who may not have had an opportunity of looking up the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act —for certain provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act to be observed by the State Government Insurance Office.

The proposal is to remove from the State Government Insurance Office Act the requirements that now exist, because there is ample machinery in the Bill that I am now introducing, which will not necessitate the office having to comply with all the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act. I have made a precis of the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act for the benefit of members so that they will know there is nothing ominous in the proposed amendment. Section 7 of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916, which has to be observed by the State Government Insurance Office refers to the opening of a banking account by the Treasurer and moneys received and paid to be credited and debited.

Section 8 relates to contribution of interest and sinking fund to be paid into the banking account. Section 9 relates to interest on capital expenditure from revenue to be charged in the books of each trading concern. Section 10 concerns charges for use of property and services. Section 11 refers to the withdrawal of money to credit; that is, capital expenditure to be drawn on certificates. Capital accounts come under Section 14, and Section 16 relates to the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to be submitted to Parliament.

Section 17 refers to the provision to meet deficiency pending appropriation; that is, advances to Treasurer's account. Section 19 relates to "books may be inspected by the Auditor General". Section 20 concerns "accounts to be balanced" annually; Section 21, "Accounts to be audited," and Section 22 refers to accounts and reports to be laid before Parliament. On perusing the Bill, I think members will get the impression that there is ample safeguard in it, combined with what is in the present Act, to obviate the necessity for that section being retained in the new measure.

I would like to repeat that this is a purely Western Australian undertaking. It has functioned in the interests of the

State. I think I am right in saying that the actual amount over the years paid by the State Insurance Office and the private companies to the Treasury is £776,000. Those are from the companies that operate in Western Australia. It cannot be said that those companies are purely Western Australian. I am not criticising the companies in any way because they are doing a service to the public; if they were not, they would not be able to continue. Without being critical in my approach to this aspect, I may say that those companies operate in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth and, speaking from memory, there are approximately 60 operating in Western Australia.

Some of them also extend their activities overseas, and incidentally the insurance companies and directorates are interlocked with other business and commercial concerns; rightly, too, from their point of view. But their objective is profit, and I suggest that if the State Insurance Office were given the right to indulge in general insurance business, Parliament would be doing a service to the State.

Members will note that provision is contained in the Bill for the requisite amount of taxation that the State office, if operating as a private company, would pay to be debited against its funds. Fire brigade charges and the general cost of administration will be met by the office and to all intents and purposes it will be an undertaking operating in reasonably fair competition with the private insurance companies.

Mr. Perkins: Are the other State trading concerns to be put on a similar basis?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We are not dealing with other State trading concerns. The Government that the hon. member supported held office for six years and did not see fit to alter the basis on which those undertakings operate. There is no reason why, under this measure, the relations between the State office and the private companies should not be harmonious.

This Bill represents an extension of a social service in the interests of the people of the State. The result might be cheaper insurance, and although members may claim that there has not been any violent clamour for the extension of these activities, I think the figures I have quoted and the general expansion revealed since the office received legal status warrant our giving serious consideration to an extension of its functions. Adequate safeguards are provided for keeping correct accounts and for crediting and debiting the particular funds with the necessary entries. Premiums received for life insurance cannot be used for any purpose other than that for which they are specifically intended.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You spoke of the payment of charges to the Treasury. Will the State office pay rates to the City Council?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Speaking subject to correction, I think there would be no question of its paying rates to the local authority. Reverting again to the possiblity of the Commonwealth's extending its activities in this State, it would be less likely to arrange for re-insurance with private companies than with the State office provided we had the extra authority to engage in general insurance business. I am given to understand that in the matter of re-insurance, the State office would co-operate with the private companies and I think they would admit that the State office has always adopted a reasonable attitude.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is not usual for a life assurance office to do general business as well.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Queensland and New South Wales offices have been operating in that way for many years. There will be no monopoly on the part of the State office and no obligation upon any person to take out a policy with the State office. In view of the growing population of the State, however, and taking into account its general development, there is sound reason for giving the State office the authority it seeks. I have read through the "Hansard" reports of the speeches delivered in both Houses when a similar measure was introduced some time ago.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: In what year was that?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In 1946, on which occasion the member for Mt. Lawley made a valuable contribution, as did also the present Leader of the Country Party. In the other Chamber, too, some interesting speeches were made. I think the Leader of the Country Party will find that one or two objections he raised on that occasion have now been removed. As to the debate that then took place in the other Chamber, my summing up is that a few members were opposed to State trading; but in the intervening years, there has been a great change. I have already stated that the population of the State is increasing rapidly, and the State office has clearly indicated that it is capable of conducting all classes of insurance.

Any member who has had dealings with the manager must agree that he is a highly capable and very industrious officer and that his staff is on the target all the time. I say with sincerity that it is an organisation whose members have not the idea that the office exists for their benefit; they realise that they are there to give service to the public. At any rate,

that is the impression one gains, and in all the circumstances the House would be well advised to pass the measure.

On this, the occasion of introducing my first Bill as a Minister, I hope the House will give the measure its blessing and that in another place the approach will be made on a broad Western Australian basis and that the objections raised some years ago will not be persisted in. If this happens, the State Insurance Office in the near future will become fully fledged and entitled to engage in all forms of insurance business. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [5.0]: This Bill is similar to others that have been introduced from time to time over a number of years in the past. I introduced a measure, most of the provisions of which were similar to those in the Bill now before us, some little time ago. When such a measure was last introduced by the then Leader of the Opposition, I supported the majority of the proposals contained in it—they are now incorporated in this Bill—and I continue to do so.

In my view, the Government should have given consideration to extending the franchise of another place to those who dwell in flats and that provision was contained in the measure that I introduced. The first provision in the Bill now before us is that the age limit for candidates at elections for another place should be altered from 30 to 21 years, but I see no necessity for that. After all, another place is a House of review where experience is supposed to be in evidence.

Mr. McCulloch: You believe in having women jurors.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The next provision is to give a vote to the husband or wife of the person who has a legal or equitable estate or the husband or wife of a householder if his or her usual place of abode is the dwellinghouse. I see no objection to that. In these days I believe the husband and wife are sympathetically inclined towards each other, politically—

The Minister for Justice: Not always.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so, but after all, I think that as husband and wife share the responsibilities of the household, both should be given a vote for the House which represents those with the greatest responsibility in the community, and there I refer to the mother and father of a family. I have always been a strong advocate of family influence in every direction. The family is the centre of the way of life that we respect most and once that goes, as we have been told it has gone in the U.S.S.R., little remains in which we can have faith.

The next provision deals with plural voting. I see no reason why plural voting should continue. In the days when the Legislative Council represented solely the property owners, plural voting was probably advisable as the owner of property might easily have interests in several different provinces. Now that we have got away from the feeling that another place is representative solely of the property owners, I do not think plural voting is necessary and I see no objection to its abolition. The last amendment contained in the Bill is a technical one to bring the legislation up to date.

There is a great deal of misapprehension about who are the electors of another place. I say the elector for that House is the family man with responsibilities, and who will deny him the right of direct representation in the affairs of the State? The man who is responsible for the bringing up of a family has a greater right to direct representation than has a lad of 21 years whom he may be supporting, or any other single man who is free to go where he likes, to spend his money as he wishes—

Mr. J. Hegney: In case of war he is the first line of defence.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I can see no objection to that. I have had personal experience of war and know what it means. The young man is then selected because he is best fitted to serve the nation. Who suffers most? Does the hon. member think that the young man who goes to war, or his mother and father suffer most? I know well who feels it most deeply and it is not the boy of from 18 to 25 years of age. Admittedly he risks his life and sometimes gives his all, but it is the parents that really suffer. I have had experience in that regard, and I know. It is all very well to say that another place is not democratic, but I say that it is democratic to give a man—

The Minister for Justice: It is a minority vote in another place.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not a minority vote of the family man. Are we to begrudge the family man direct representation? Another place is a House of great importance which represents a very important section of the community—the family man—that I think is entitled to direct representation. If the provisions of the Bill are agreed to, the franchise will be extended to the wife of the family man. I believe that the Minister for Justice was wrong in attacking the excellent system that exists. I admit that the present legislation needs widening to give in-

creased representation and I will support the second reading of the Bill, to enable that to be done.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [5.10]: I am pleased with the reception accorded the Bill, but I feel that the age limit for candidates for election to another place should be reduced from 30 to 21 years. The member for Mt. Lawley seems to think that a person of 21 years of age has no sense of responsibility, but there are some that are most learned and hold high positions at that age. One man was Prime Minister of England at 21 years of age.

Mr. McCulloch: Would the 21 years' age limit apply to women jurors, also?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You have more sense today than you had at 21 years of age.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I feel that we cannot have true democracy without the necessary representation. Why should a minority-representation House be in a position to veto any legislation put forward by this Chamber?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Another place is not a minority House.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is not a minority House as regards the family man.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Why should the family man who is represented in another place be able to veto there anything put forward by this House?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Should he not have direct representation?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He has representation in this House and in another place, but it is absurd to say that about 16 per cent. of the electors of this House should, through their representation in another place, be able to veto anything sent there by this Chamber. Does the hon. member want to go back hundreds of years to when the people were vastly ignorant? With up-to-date methods of education a person of 21 years of age has nowadays, in the vast majority of instances, more brains and capacity from the point of view of learning than those of greater years.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: It is experience that gives you wisdom.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That may be so, but eventually one attains an age where wisdom is lost. When I first came into this House the average age of members of another place was about 70 years and there were some there nearly 90 years of age.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You are not trying to alter that!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. I do not need to, but I say that the man of 21 years of age is entitled to be represented in another place just as he is here. This is the more responsible Chamber of the two because by far the most of our legislation is initiated here. Another place is only a House of review. The House of Lords is now only a temporary House of review—for three months only—because if a Bill is sent there by the House of Commons and is not agreed to, after three months it automatically becomes law. I see no substance in the argument of the member for Mt. Lawley and I feel that he is out of date—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am very much up to date, and the Minister knows it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I feel that the hon. member is very traditional. Tradition is all right, but it can be taken too far.

Mr. Bovell: I would keep quiet. He has been generous to you in regard to this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I desire members to express their opinions and we want this measure to pass another place on its merits. The people will demand legislation of this sort in the near future and if a referendum on the question were held tomorrow, I doubt whether another place would continue to exist.

Mr. Hutchinson: What about that revolution you spoke of?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is men of the calibre of the member for Cottesloe that bring about revolutions, because he is too old fashioned. Probably there would not have been a revolution in Russia if they had been more up to date with their education at the time. When they revolted only two per cent. of the population had any education, but today the figure is up to 98 per cent.

Mr. Hutchinson: Do you think we should follow the Russian example ?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think that a revolution was probably necessary to better the conditions of the people as they existed in Russia at that time, but I do not think a revolt would better the conditions in Australia or in the United Kingdom. I absolutely disagree with the claim that the minimum age of a member in another place should be 30 years because he has more wisdom than a younger man and that the age of a member who enters this House may be 21 apparently because he does not need much wisdom.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I said that a man of greater age had more experience

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is the same as having more wisdom. I am opposed to plural voting and I am pleased the member for Mt. Lawley agrees with me on that. Although it is possible for a person to have 10 votes in a Legislative Council election, that prerogative is very seldom exercised and therefore I think

the relative clause in the Bill is extremely liberal. I am pleased with the reception that members have given the Bill. I feel sure it will pass through this Chamber and I hope it will receive the same consideration in another place. It is a modest measure, but it is a step in the right direction.

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

Ayes	31
Noes	5
Majority for	26

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. North
Mr. Doney	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Owen
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Nalder	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Heal	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Yates
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Hawke	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Nulsen	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver

Mr. SPEAKER: As there is an absolute majority of members voting, I declare the question passed in the affirmative.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 7 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not propose to waste the time of the House explaining my objection to the clause because I have already done so during the second reading. After all is said and done the Legislative Council is a House of review and I see no reason for any alteration of the age limit.

The Minister for Native Welfare: What age did you insert in your jury Bill yesterday?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT : The position is a little different with a jury.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not dealing with the jury Bill now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I intend to vote against the clause.

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

Ayes	21
Noes	14
Majority for	7

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
Mr. Lawrence	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Heal	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Yates
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Hawke	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Nulsen	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 3 to 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—COLLIE CLUB (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.30]: This Bill was introduced by the member for Collie and its aim is to resolve certain difficulties concerning the legal position of the Collie Club, which was registered under the Companies Act of 1893. It was quite apparent from the evidence given on behalf of the club at the Select Committee inquiry a few weeks ago that over the years, because of changing circumstances, the records of shareholders had become so inaccurate that it is impossible to determine who are now the shareholders.

It is intended to vest the property of the club in the association which it is proposed to form. I have no objection to the Bill. I believe that the evidence given was true and accurate. A meeting of all shareholders of the club was held quite recently and it was the unanimous decision that this step should be taken. In the circumstances, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th September.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.35]: I realise that from time to time amendments to the Companies Act will be necessary in the light of the experience of the Minister, the registrar, auditors, company secretaries and directors, members of companies and the host of people who are associated with the operations of the Act. However, it is important to keep amendments to the minimum because of the great number of persons and companies affected by the complications associated with amendments.

My concern is to avoid unnecessary restrictions and requirements. It is wellnigh impossible to cross the last "t" and dot the last "i" in respect of company administration and law. In many cases it is desirable to allow reasonable latitude, provided there is no obvious danger to the public interest. Unfortunately there is no uniform company law in Australia. I understand there are certain constitutional difficulties. It cannot be denied there has been a great benefit throughout the Commonwealth from the uniform bankruptcy law. That is a good example of the value of uniform laws in regard to matters that have a general impact on the Australian community and the smooth working of industry and commerce and, in fact, on society generally.

In this measure there are several amendments with which I am in complete agreement, but there are others which call for closer examination. The proposed amendment to give the registrar certain exemption powers in respect of associations registered under the Act goes, in my opinion, a little too far. Would it not be preferable to leave the exemption powers with the Attorney General rather than vest them in the registrar himself? Furthermore, should not the exemptions to be granted be more clearly defined? The Bill proposes that the registrar may exempt an association registered as a company from such of the provisions of the Act and for such period as he deems fit. Members will agree that is fairly wide and sweeping in its effect, realising that the exemption power is proposed to be vested in the registrar and not in the political head for the time being. Normally I am in favour of a certain amount of elasticity, but I feel that the sweeping powers proposed go a little too far and could, in certain circumstances, be very embarrassing to the registrar himself.

The Minister for Justice: You would be satisfied with that provision if the power were vested in the Minister concerned?

Mr. COURT: I would. I think that the provisions of the Act to which the exemption may be applied should be defined. For instance, it could be stipulated that he could grant exemption if he thought fit for returns of directors, returns of allotments, and procedure for raising capital. That would prevent unreasonable requests having to be dealt with by either the Attorney General or the registrar, or whoever the authority is vested in. I would be quite happy though, if the amendment provided for the Attorney General to have these powers, and not only the registrar.

Mr. Lawrence: What is the position with regard to the State Arbitration Act?

Mr. COURT: I am dealing with the operations of the Companies Act, and I feel that in view of the fact that the section under consideration gives the principal exemption power specifically to the Attorney General, the other exemption provisions that it is proposed to insert should also be directly related to the Attorney General. After all, when he is considering a general application for exemption to bring a body within the provisions of this section, he has to make certain investigations to satisfy himself. At the same time he could make decisions regarding other administrative matters which he thinks should be waived in respect of a particular organisation.

There is a further provision that specifies the minimum size type to be used in a prospectus, and a penalty of £200 is set out. The provision occurs twice in the measure. The second time it is applicable to foreign companies, but the £200 penalty is not retained as a specific amendment. I can well appreciate the object of this provision, but I feel it is unnecessary. Perhaps examples of type of unreasonably small size could be produced in isolated instances, especially in respect of the preparation of the information in a prospectus known as the statutory information. However, I still feel it is a case of excessive legislation.

I am assured that a request to the Stock Exchange would have overcome the problem. I am also assured that the matter has not been discussed with the Stock Exchange officially and no request has been made to ensure that a larger type of lettering is used for a prospectus. The Stock Exchange requirements for companies seeking flotation or listing are very severe, and I can assure the House they are very well enforced by the several Stock Exchanges operating in the various capital cities of the Commonwealth. I am sure they could be relied upon to co-operate without this amendment being incorporated in the Act.

Mr. Johnson: Are all companies floated through the Stock Exchange?

Mr. COURT: The most important ones, and those with which the registrar is particularly concerned, are floated through the Stock Exchange. Furthermore, the provisions for foreign companies could produce anomalies. The provision proposed by the amendment could be the means of Western Australian residents losing the benefit of the opportunity to invest in worth-while foreign companies which, without prior knowledge of the restrictive printing measure in Western Australia, would refuse to reprint their prospectus to comply with the proposed local provision. Even if they were willing to reprint, there would be many instances in which time would defeat them.

For the information of the House I would explain that the final stages of a major public company flotation are normally conducted under intense pressure. Unless one has actually experienced the conditions, he cannot fully appreciate just how exacting they are and how vital becomes the time factor. It is quite conceivable that, with the best intentions in the world, a prospectus could be produced that was highly satisfactory except, through a misunderstanding on the part of the printer, that the type was less than eight points face measurement in certain parts. I assure members that the intense pressure at the vital time just prior to release of the prospectus makes it impracticable in many cases to have the document reprinted and still conform with the time schedule normally followed in major public company flotations.

Members will appreciate that some of these major concerns are floated simultaneously in several capital cities, so that there are several Companies Acts to be complied with, as well as the requirements of several Stock Exchanges. It could easily happen that, through a mischance, a perfectly good prospectus, apart from the size of type, could find its way on to the market. The amendment does not permit of the exercising of any discretion by the Attorney General or the registrar. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to, but that the good offices of the Stock Exchanges throughout Australia will be availed of. I am rather surprised at the extraordinary penalty provided for an offence in respect of this matter.

The Minister for Justice: It is the maximum.

Mr. COURT: As the Minister says, the amount of £200 is the maximum penalty, but it still indicates that a rather serious view is taken of the offence which, after all, only involves a person seeking the information in obtaining an explanation from the company's officials. The Act already provides adequate precautions in this regard. He could go to the Companies Office or, if he were particularly independent and anxious to read the print, and his eyes were bad, he could use a magnifying glass.

If people were diligent in seeking the information prescribed by the Act, I would be more in sympathy with the amendment, but, alas, we find that investors only interest therselves in such phases as the members of the board, the investigating valuers and accountants' reports, and those of other experts, the past history of the company, the asset-backing and the dividend prospects. Beyond these features, I am afraid they pay scant attention to the contents of the prospectus.

The Minister for Justice: Why should they use microscopic print?

Mr. COURT: Small print has been used in some cases, and I do not think one would have to look far to find a prospectus where type had been used that would not conform to the requirements of the Act, but I have yet to see one of a company that was not a reputable concern. The considerations were purely those of space, and not an attempt to deceive or defraud. I do not think the Minister could produce one such prospectus in which there was an intention to deceive the public. It is well understood that people will not read this wealth of information that the Act makes obligatory, and as a result of which companies have tended to cut down on the size of the type.

The Minister for Justice: I do not think there is any suggestion of fraud; it is a matter of being able to read the statutory information.

Mr. COURT: Members might ask, "Why resist the amendment if the good offices of the Stock Exchanges can be used to discipline the companies?" There is a good reason, and I have touched on it sufficiently, I think, and it is the case of emergency. If the Minister insists on the amendment, I hope he will be prepared to accept some modification giving the registrar or the Attorney General power to accept smaller type in cases where he considers it is legible and of a suitable character.

A further provision in the measure is for the compulsory despatch of notices of meetings to auditors. One cannot dispute the merit of the right of the auditor to receive meeting notices. This was dealt with by the Cohen committee in Great Britain, which recommended that the British Act be extended so that the auditor would receive the notice, as suggested by the amendment before us now. I can only envisage extreme cases where the proposed amendment would achieve more than the existing provision. It may have a valuable effect if an attempt is made to displace an auditor who has crossed swords with the directors.

I can only say that an auditor who cannot protect himself under the present provisions of the Act is lacking in imagination and ingenuity, because the Act already contains some protection for him.

I would support the amendment on the understanding that it did not give the auditor the right to meddle in the management of the company, because that is not his duty. In connection with liquidators, the Minister has claimed that the principle of the independence of the liquidator is sound. As a general statement, that may be all right, but it often happens that those in the best position to wind up a company are the ones with an intimate knowledge of its affairs. Personally, I cannot see the need to amend the present provisions, which work very well, in spite of the Minister's observations about the possibility of defeating the intention of the Act.

The Minister for Justice: It has already been flouted.

Mr. COURT: There has been no case, to my knowledge, of anyone abusing the position with respect to liquidation procedure under the Act.

The Minister for Justice: They have resigned and become liquidators at the same meeting.

Mr. COURT: I do not know about that happening at the same meeting, but I do know that they have resigned in close proximity to the meeting at which they were appointed liquidators. The Minister will admit, I think, that in each of these cases it has been a closely-held family concern and not a public company in which either public creditors or shareholders were interested.

An important matter the Minister has not stressed in his comments concerns the safeguards in the Act to protect persons who are dissatisfied with the appointment of the liquidators in all cases, except where the actual appointment is made by the court, for naturally such an appointment is paramount. It can properly be claimed that where officers of the company are appointed immediately following their resignation, the general public are neither interested as shareholders nor as creditors. Why interfere unnecessarily in the internal affairs of the company? I consider that the amendment is unnecessary, and, in any case, the disqualification period of two years is excessive.

A further important amendment is one which proposes to defer claims in the liquidation of creditor companies where such creditor companies are also holders of more than three-quarters of the issued capital of the insolvent company. The theory advanced is that the companies holding a commanding share position in the insolvent company should be deferred, in respect of their creditor claims, because of their abnormal knowledge of the company's internal affairs and their favourable position to know what was going on, and possibly to protect themselves to the disadvantage of other creditors.

This sounds convincing if we do not examine the problem further. In my opinion, this hits at the very root of the recognised relationships between debtor and creditor, and should not be adopted. I suggest it would have a discouraging effect on Eastern States and overseas people who were desirous of extending their activities to Western Australia, or of giving assistance to existing or potential activities here. A trader or person giving credit to a limited liability company does so with the full knowledge of the limitations of liability inherent in the limited company structure. I cannot see why there should be discrimination between one class of creditor and another beyond the priorities already prescribed and well understood under the Bankruptcy Act and the Companies Act.

If we take the case of a predominantly-owned, or even wholly-owned, company which has got into difficulties, the principals could decide to render some assistance through cash advances or the supply of further goods. Alternatively, they could wind the company up and allow the existing creditors to take the risk of what they would get. If, however, they advance further funds, or supply additional goods, to keep the company going, that possibly improves the position of all the creditors.

Why then should they rank as a deferred creditors? They might be prepared to advance money on the understanding that the assistance is of a temporary nature and shall be withdrawn over a given period of one, two or more years, but they might be wholly unwilling to commit that amount of money as permanent fixed capital. It is quite possible that such a concern, if it is an overseas company, might have other projects at the blueprint stage requiring money in 12 or 24 months' time, and it would want to take money systematicaly from one venture and put it into another.

If it is to become a deferred creditor, we can appreciate the reluctance the concern would have to grant the assistance it might otherwise render. For this reason, I do not favour the amendment. I feel the present state of affairs should be allowed to continue. I have no doubt that the merchants and others who are advancing money or goods to limited companies, are prepared to accept the normal hazards of trade, because they use their various methods to examine the stability of the concern to which they are going to give assistance or advance credit.

The Minister for Justice: They would have prior knowledge of the stability of the company.

Mr. COURT: It is true that if they owned three-quarters of the capital, they would know what was going on within the company.

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Mr. COURT: I respectfully suggest to the Minister that he cannot tie up every loophole in every Act. I can quickly think of three or four ways in which this amendment, no matter how well intentioned it is, could be defeated. One is for the company with the three-quarter holding to arrange for the assistance to be granted through a subsidiary company which is not connected at all with the debtor company. It would still have the knowledge to which the Minister refers, but it would be completely exempt from the application of this provision. If we try to tie the position up, we will get such a complicated state of affairs that the normal relationship between debtor and creditor, and between company and company, will be permanently injured. Even if the House decides to adopt the amendment in principle, I suggest that some correction in the drafting is necessary because the words "subscribed and issued capital" are used in the measure and I do not think that is the correct term. There again the expert who drafted the Bill would know and might have some reason for using those words, although they are not usual.

Furthermore, I suggest to the House that if it adopts the principle of this amendment, some protection should be given to existing cases, for a period of 12 months or 24 months, so that people who have entered into financial commitments are given a chance to rearrange their affairs in order that the effect of the amendment is not retrospective. There is also an amendment to give the registrar power to grant an extension of time for the lodging of funds under Section 290. I consider that a most desirable provision.

The registrar has entered into a working arrangement to overcome a problem within the principal Act and, as I understand the wording of this measure, the Minister proposes to give effect to this common-sense working arrangement, which is a very happy one as far as those who have to indulge in liquidations are concerned. Members will appreciate that it is not always practicable or economic to distribute moneys within the prescribed six-months period and the registrar's discretion is very necessary in respect of this particular matter.

The Minister for Justice: He has been doing it, but it has not been legal.

Mr. COURT: That is so, and he has handled it very well. The provision permitting certain foreign companies to dispense with the distinguishing numbers for shares, in certain cases, is a very desirable one, and I think it is a realistic provision to incorporate in the Act.

Certain amendments are proposed in respect of investment companies and those provisions appear to be both desirable and necessary. I understand that there is only one company in this State which is recognised as an investment company within the meaning of the principal Act. The object sought to be achieved appears to be most desirable, although I have had no experience in the actual control or operation of these investment companies which are classed as such, or can be classed as such, within the provisions of the Western Australian Companies Act. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill on the understanding that these matters to which I have referred will be the subject of discussion at a later stage.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [6.4] in moving the second reading said: This measure proposes to empower the Minister for Child Welfare to make reciprocal arrangements with other States of Australia and with other British Dominions with respect to the adoption of children. This power has not existed hitherto and as a result a number of difficult situations regarding the adoption of children have developed in this State and we have not been able to grant the degree of reciprocity which we would desire to extend in that regard to other States and other British Dominions.

The only other amendment in the Bill provides for the registration of the birth of a child, where no registration of birth has previously occurred, whenever an order of adoption is made or is filed in the Supreme Court under the provisions of the Act. If in those circumstances a person is able to convince the Registrar General that action as proposed in this part of the Bill is desirable and justified, the registrar will have power to register the birth and meet the wishes of the adopting parents in that direction.

Members probably know of actual cases where both of these amendments would have proved helpful. Some cases have been specifically referred to the Government either through the Minister for Justice and his officers or through other Ministers and their officers. The Bill appears to be desirable in every way, and, in addition, the provisions contained in it are required urgently to meet some difficult and rather distressing cases. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. V. Doney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.