

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 1st November, 1955.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Zoological Gardens Act Amendment.
 - 2, Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property.
- Passed.*

BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL, TEACHING HOSPITALS.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The intention of this Bill is to provide machinery to enable co-operation between the university medical school and certain public hospitals in which medical students will do portion of their training. The Bill also provides for the setting up of committees which will maintain liaison between the university and the managing body of the teaching hospital, and advise on all matters relating to the teaching facilities at the hospital. It stipulates that only a public hospital can become a teaching hospital, and to that end the hospitals which are to be regarded as public hospitals are defined in the measure.

Infectious diseases hospitals and tuberculous hospitals established under the Health Act, State mental hospitals, and the Princess Margaret Hospital for children, as well as public hospitals established under the Hospitals Act, all come within the scope of this definition. That does not mean that all of these hospitals will be declared as teaching hospitals. Only those where the necessary facilities can be provided will be developed as teaching hospitals.

The University Senate is given authority to notify the Minister whenever it considers a public hospital is suitable for the teaching of medicine, and steps may then be taken to have the hospital used for that purpose. The Bill provides that when a teaching hospital is so declared the managing body of the hospital may enter into an agreement with the University Senate for the provision of the necessary teaching facilities, the admission of students, the appointment of members of the medical staff of the faculty of medicine as members of the honorary staff of the hospital, etc., and the appointment of an electoral committee which will be responsible for the election of members of the honorary staff and other staff concerned with teaching duties.

The object of this agreement is to enable the Senate to insist on the provision of satisfactory facilities at teaching hospitals. I am informed the Senate will not recommend the declaration of any teaching hospital until negotiations have taken place with the controlling body of the hospital and the framework of an agreement has been laid.

The Bill also empowers the managing authority of a teaching hospital to make by-laws relating to the admission, duties and discipline of medical students, and fees to be paid by students for use of facilities supplied by the hospital.

It further provides that where a public hospital which is controlled by the Minister, and not by a board, is declared to be a teaching hospital, an advisory committee will be appointed. These advisory committees will act as their titles indicate. Their responsibility will be to advise the Minister on action concerned with the training of medical students. The personnel of these committees are set out in the Bill and vary according to whether the teaching hospital deals with mental patients or the ordinary type of patient.

The measure has been prepared after consultations between the Medical Department, the British Medical Association, the University Senate, and other interested organisations. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [4.42]: in moving the second reading said: This is only a small Bill, with one active clause. Its sole purpose is to make it possible for bank officers to obtain a five-day week. The Bill was introduced in another place

by Mr. Johnson—the member for Leederville—who, until his election to Parliament, was an employee of a private bank, and who is well aware of the implications contained in this measure. The Bill is a non-party one, and I hope it will be received as such in this House.

As every businessman is aware, the principal legislation covering the transaction of banking business is the Bills of Exchange Act, a Commonwealth law. This Act lays upon banks the liability of very severe damages if certain acts are not done, or certain transactions are not completed on any business day. This law lends itself to very real risk of extensive fraud in the event of banks failing to carry out any normal business upon a day which is a business day. Business days are defined in Section 98(3) of the Act in the following manner:—

“Non-business days” for the purposes of this Act means Sunday, Good Friday, Christmas Day and a Bank Holiday. Any other day is a business day.

Members will therefore understand that by including the provision for each and every Saturday in the schedule of the Bank Holidays Act of Western Australia, we will give to banks in this State the protection set out in Section 98(2) of the Bills of Exchange Act in the following manner:—

When the day on which any payment, presentment, notice, noting, protest, acceptance, act or thing should be made, given or done in connection with a bill, cheque or note, falls on a non-business day, it may be made, given or done on the business day next following.

I hope members will understand that the method adopted in the Bill now before us is the only way to enable bank employees to join the many related industries and professions which now work a five-day week. Members will be aware that business transactions cannot be completed by banks on Saturdays at present if there is need for the services of the Titles Office to register land transactions; the Stamp Office for agreements, contracts, etc.; the Taxation Department; the Perth City Council or local government offices for settlements relative to adjustments of rates and taxes; or accountancy firms for balance sheets, etc. Most insurance offices reduce their staff on Saturdays to such a skeleton that the completion of policies is almost invariably left until the following Mondays with a cover note for the week-ends.

On Saturdays, banks are open to the public for only an hour and a half, from 9.30 to 11 a.m. In view of the many types of transactions which banks are unable to complete on Saturday, most branches arrange rosters of employees to be off on Saturday. This is a most unsatisfactory procedure, owing to

the variation in the type of business between branches and the different size of staff at various branches. The staff can be as small as two and as great as 100. These differences are unavoidable.

In the variation of treatment between employees of the same bank at different branches, and between different branches in the one locality, in a two-man branch there can be no Saturdays off, but in a three-man, four-man, or five-man branch it is possible to arrange for each member of the staff to have a Saturday off as long as the manager does not anticipate having a Saturday off, unless the branch concerned is large enough to carry an accountant to allow the manager to take part in the rostered Saturdays off. I imagine it is bad luck to be manager of a branch in some instances.

In the lower ranks of the staff resentment is created against those directly responsible for drawing up these rosters. The practice of working on Saturdays in banks is directly responsible for the loss of many junior and female employees in that industry because in most other industries they need work only a five-day week.

Before going into the pros and cons of the Bill, there are a couple of items which I would like to clarify. This measure does not propose to reduce the working hours of bank officers; they will still work a 40-hour week as provided by the award.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You mean 35 hours.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: They will still work 40 hours as provided by the award. They will not work 35 hours. The award states 40 hours a week, but it does not stipulate a fixed number of hours a day. Mr. Baxter might have more experience of the work done in banks than I, but I am informed that the staff work a 40-hour week regardless of the method. That is one of the characteristics of the bank officers' award; it does not state that they shall work a certain number of hours a day, but only that they shall work 40 hours a week. This Bill will not reduce production in any way. Banks are not productive agencies in the real sense.

Hon. H. Hearn: They give a service to the public.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: They do give a service to the public, and bank officers clearly contend that they put service and loyalty to their employers before anything else. Yet they still say that they can give good service without working on Saturdays.

Banks are the custodians of people's cash, credit and securities, and there is no cause to complain of the service given to the public by bank officers, particularly those in the country. Even on Show Day, and other such days, there has been no cause for complaint. If there is one set of employees ready and willing to give service

to the public, it is the bank officers. I do not think that any member can complain of the service he has received from bank officers, particularly in the country.

Hon. H. Hearn: But nobody has complained.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I was afraid the hon. member was about to make some remark that would lead to a complaint. It should be of interest to members to know that in Tasmania legislation has been placed on the statute book which is almost identical with the provisions of the Bill before us. It was introduced by a private member of the Legislative Council in that State and agreed to by both Houses.

This proposal is by no means novel. The banking industry has a five-day week in many parts of the world—for instance, in Tasmania and New Zealand, and in most of the United States of America. The situation in the United States of America is especially interesting as the banking system there is quite different from ours, and their Bills of Exchange Act permits the individual bank to choose its own opening hours. Furthermore, retail trading continues throughout Saturday and, in some parts, on Sunday also.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What will the bank officers do with the Saturday if we grant it?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: What does the hon. member do on Saturday?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I do not go down to the trots and work there.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not suggest that they want Saturday off for that purpose.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But they go there and get paid for the job.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Is the hon. member trying to belittle these men?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No; but I am telling you the truth.

The PRESIDENT: I would ask that the hon. member modify his voice.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: My voice has been the envy of many people, and I cannot help it if it is pitched in a rather high tone. I do not think we should charge the bank officers with a desire to get Saturday off in order to attend the trots. They are only asking for an amenity that is enjoyed by other trades and professions. I was saying that in the United States of America retail trading continues all day Saturday and, in some parts, on Sunday also. Despite this, a majority of the banks have adopted a five-day working week.

Hon. L. Craig: Do not the trams run on Saturday?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you think they should?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That is quite a different matter. People want to travel to their homes or to their work, but banking is a different matter. There are lots of transactions that cannot be completed on Saturday because other businesses are closed on that day; and for the little business that remains to be done, it would be quite easy for the banks to make other arrangements.

Hon. L. Craig: The shops do not close on Saturday morning.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That is so.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you think they should?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Why should they not? The banks cannot close on Saturday morning unless this Bill be passed.

Hon. H. Hearn: Why cannot they close?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Because of the provisions of the Bills of Exchange Act.

Hon. L. Craig: Do the banks want to close on Saturday morning?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The request for Saturday closing has come from the Bank Officials Association.

Hon. H. Hearn: That is not the banks.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The coal-miners wanted Saturday off; but did the colliery owners want to give them that day off? The bank officers want an amenity that has been granted to all other professions.

Hon. H. Hearn: Not to all other professions.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is much banking done on Saturday?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Some business is done in the savings bank, but there is none transacted in the trading banks for which other arrangements could not be made. It has been said that farmers would be inconvenienced. In every district there is a branch or agency, and deposits or withdrawals can be made during the week. There are occasions when farmers go into the town on Saturdays, but they could go in on other days. A little adjustment is all that is needed to bring this proposal into operation. Why should the bank officers work on Saturday morning when all other related professions and industries have that morning clear? In the United States the five-day working week is operating satisfactorily, just as it is in New Zealand and Tasmania.

Hon. H. Hearn: Retail shops in Tasmania are not open on Saturday.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: But they are in America, and in some parts they are open on Sunday also. Let me quote from an article on the "Five-day Week in New

York State" in which William F. Ploch, President of the Nassau County Trust Company is reported as follows:—

Personally, as a banker, I have been opposed to Saturday closing but from a practical standpoint I have to admit that it has worked out. The public has responded. I do not know of any problem caused by Saturday closing that would cause enough concern to raise doubt regarding the advantage of the move.

That is a statement by a responsible banker in America, who doubted the wisdom of granting the five-day working week, but, after it had been given a trial, admitted that there was nothing he could say against it. He also stated there was less overtime than before the five-day week went into effect. Those statements are worthy of consideration. The report is dated July, 1947; but more recently—in August last—the percentage had risen to 85.3 closing all the year round, with a further 22 closing for summer Saturdays only.

Opposition to the proposal to give bank officers a five-day week has been expressed under the following headings:—(1) The matter is one for arbitration; (2) the public needs the service of banks on a Saturday; (3) banks should not close while other businesses are open. Let us deal with these items, but in reverse order.

First take the contention that the banks should not close while other businesses are open. In my opinion that is completely illogical, and if the argument applies to banks, it applies equally to warehouses, Government departments, insurance companies and the like. Experience has shown, however, that all such organisations can be done without on Saturdays. We have an instance in Foundation Day, which is a bank holiday; yet all other businesses are open and carry on with no complaint on that day. That is proof that there is no reason why business cannot be carried on without the banks being open on Saturday mornings.

I agree that some change is given out on Saturday mornings, and that a few cheques are cashed. I suppose a few credits are deposited also, but there is no business done on that morning that could not be done equally well on Friday if the customers were a little more thoughtful and rearranged their business accordingly.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did you not say that the insurance companies had skeleton staffs on Saturdays?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Could not the banks do likewise?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I have said that where possible the banks work a roster giving their staff Saturday mornings off, but that leads to dissatisfaction—

Hon. L. Craig: That is not true.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why does not that apply to the insurance offices? That is an awkward question.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Mr. Craig could tell the hon. member more about insurance offices than I can. I admit that on Saturdays the insurance offices reduce their staffs to a mere skeleton.

Hon. L. Craig: That is done by the stock firms, also, and the arrangement works very well.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That emphasises the fact that it is possible to give the bank officers Saturday morning off.

Hon. L. Craig: Just the reverse.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I have tried to explain that a number of transactions are deferred over the week-end because of the skeleton staffs—with a covering note till the Monday morning, as members well know. Where businesses are open, night-safes are already available in most localities; and if the demand for them was great enough, they could be made available in still other places. I repeat that Foundation Day is purely a bank holiday, yet all other businesses are open.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is that the 26th January?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not know the exact date.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I thought you did not, or you would not have said that.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The hon. member would delight to put a spoke in my wheel, but he has not succeeded yet.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I did not know you had a wheel.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The only argument that can be advanced against this Bill is that some people want to make deposits in the banks—in the savings bank sections—on Saturdays; but I have already explained that, by rearranging their transactions a little, those people could make their deposits on Friday, or some other day during the week.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: But the majority want to bank on Saturday.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not think that is right. The people who make deposits on Saturdays are in the minority, and they could easily make other arrangements. Withdrawals may require a little more thought than deposits; but even then, it is always possible to register a customer's signature with an agency—

Hon. L. C. Diver: What about the money taken on Fridays? Would you make them carry it over till Monday?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: They could deposit it in the safes—

Hon. L. C. Diver: No.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Then what do they do on Foundation Day? What do firms do now with their Saturdays' takings? Almost all retail businesses are open till midday on Saturday, while the banks close at 11.30 a.m. What do those firms do with their Saturday mornings' takings?

Hon. L. C. Diver: But you would make it a day and a half's takings that they had to carry over.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: What is wrong with the Bill? These employees are merely asking for an amenity that has been granted to all other industries.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What was your attitude when certain people wanted their land back?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That is not relevant to this debate. I repeat that, in regard to withdrawals, it is possible to register a customer's signature at any agency of the bank that is convenient; and so withdrawals can be made during the shopping period, or in the lunch-hour, or at some other convenient time during the week. It is possible, also, to do banking by post; and, in fact, there is no banking transaction which cannot be done in that way, from the opening of an account to making deposits or even cashing cheques. The sole fault with the postal method is the time taken to do the transaction in that way and the cost of registering the notes sent through the mail.

Considerable play has been made on the conditions in country areas. We know that many farmers go to town on Saturday mornings—and on other days also—but they could easily arrange to fit in by doing their business earlier in the week if this amenity were granted to bank officers. If members opposite approached country bankers, I am sure they would be told that at present as much business is done outside of the proper banking hours as within them—

Hon. L. C. Diver: No.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Rubbish!

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: On any day in the week one can go to a country town—the people are nearly all friends in country towns—and the bank manager will oblige by transacting business out of hours—

Hon. L. C. Diver: Rubbish!

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: It is not. I repeat that country people could do their banking on a Friday just as easily as the city dweller could. It has been suggested that this question is one for arbitration, and that argument at first sight seems to have some merit. But banking is different from other industries in that the days of

business are controlled by a Commonwealth statute—the Bills of Exchange Act—and neither a State law nor the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, could override that.

Under that Act, the banks would have to remain open on Saturday mornings, even though they were compelled by the Arbitration Court to pay penalty rates. The matter could be arranged by the Commonwealth Parliament amending the Bills of Exchange Act to exclude Saturdays, and that would make Saturday closing of banks universal throughout Australia. But there is no likelihood of that being done except after consultation with several States.

It has been suggested that the Bill should be referred to a select committee, but that seems completely unnecessary and a waste of time. Any member who has doubts about what I have said should refer to the secretary of the Bank Officials Association, the secretary of the Perth Chamber of Commerce, and the secretary of the Taxpayers Association. Inquiries could be made by a single visit to the fifth floor of the C.M.L. Building. The secretary of the Associated Banks is care of the E.S. & A. Bank.

If members would give an undertaking to accept the findings of a select committee on the Bill, that might be acceptable; but there is no evidence available to a select committee that is not available to any inquiring member who cares to look for the facts in the few days before this measure is again debated. I imagine that any member who desires a select committee on this Bill is simply too lazy to make inquiries for himself, or else he wishes to delay the Bill.

Hon. L. C. Diver: You fear the outcome.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I have no fear of the outcome. I have been in this House for nearly four years now. If agreed to, the sole effect of this Bill will be to reduce the number of days on which banks are open from five and a half to five, like all related industries. The reform sought here is requested by a responsible body of highly experienced people in the industry—the Bank Officials Association. If agreed to, the Bill would not reduce production or the number of hours worked in the industry. The closing of the banks on Saturday mornings is outside the powers of the Arbitration Court and can be achieved only by this legislation.

The bank officers have always co-operated with the public; and in making this request for a five-day week, they have their duty to the public and to their employers uppermost in their minds. But they believe that they can give the same service without working on Saturdays. Is it too much to ask that they be granted the same conditions in this regard as apply to all the related industries? I would remind members that banks are constantly

looking for staff, and closing on Saturdays would put them on an equal footing with other businesses.

Would not any junior with sufficient brains to pass the necessary examinations be intelligent enough to select employment in an industry offering a five-day week, rather than one where five and a half days applied? Such a lad would get the same pay and opportunities of promotion while working five days instead of five and a half, and surely that should be taken into consideration. The banks are at a disadvantage in recruiting staff—

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What a shocking philosophy!

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The longer you speak, the worse your arguments in favour of the Bill become.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The hon. member had made up his mind long before the Bill came to this Chamber.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I never gave it a thought.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I beg to differ. A young boy with brains enough to pass an examination that is necessary for him to secure a position in a bank would surely have brains enough to select a position that offered him similar opportunities for promotion and similar amenities, but with Saturday morning off. Why should he not do that?

Hon. J. G. Hislop: And the dignity and status of life.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That is offered in many other companies besides banks.

Hon. L. C. Diver: They would not like your saying that.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Whether they like it or not, I am sure they would realise that it is a fact. The banking profession is held in high esteem by everyone. There are, however, other matters that must be taken into consideration, and I hope the House will consider them and agree to provide this amenity for bank officers. After all, it is only giving these people what employees in related businesses enjoy. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.17]: I would be inclined to call this "the Burglars' Assistance Bill." I give it that title for the simple reason that there are a lot of businesses, particularly in country areas, that remain open all Saturday. Even in the city, they are open on Saturday morning. If this Bill became law, it would mean that they would have to carry over till Monday morning all the cash they received from, say, about 2.30 on Friday afternoon. It would not be possible for them to bank that money before Monday morning; and it would be held over Friday night, Saturday night, and

Sunday night. It is possible that they have adequate arrangements to keep the money safely.

The Chief Secretary: How do hotels get on with their Saturday takings?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I was about to refer to that matter. The majority of hotels draw quite a lot of change on Saturday morning, which they carry over Saturday and Sunday night, except where they make arrangements to deposit it in a night box or to hand it over at a certain time to the local bank manager. That certainly can be done.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They have always obliged.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If banks are to be closed on Saturday morning, it will mean that change will have to be drawn on Friday afternoon, because there would be no way of drawing it on Saturday morning. It will be necessary to carry that money over Friday night. It would build up on Saturday and Sunday, and could not be deposited till Monday. There are many hotels that have Sunday sessions, and it is possible that there would be a great deal of money carried over and inadequate protection provided for it. Very often, the whole of a bank's staff is away on Sunday; they are not even in the town.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What about the money you take on Saturday?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It would be far preferable if the cash were obtainable on Saturday morning, because there would then not be that long carry-over. I feel sure members will agree that safe robberies have increased considerably. This measure would make it necessary for a greater amount of cash to be kept on the premises, and it would prove a greater temptation for thieves who were desirous of getting hold of the money, and make it easier for them to do so.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Night safes could be made available.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If we close the banks, the other industries will also close on Saturday mornings. At the moment, a number of employees do not work on Saturday mornings. If we are to provide this amenity for the bank officers, why should we not close everything? Why should we not close the shops and do away with trams, buses, and other public utilities on Saturdays? Let us close everything and sit at home and enjoy the rest that this Bill seeks to provide.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Close all s.p. shops.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As the hon. member says, let us close all s.p. shops. Banking is big business.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Not on Saturday morning.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If these people feel they cannot work on Saturday morning in order to provide a service to the public, it is about time we had something else in their place. I do not know what the hon. member has in mind in that direction.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: These people have given a service to the public.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No one would deny that. But they are paid to do so; and, in the majority of cases, they are paid well to give a service to the public. But why should the majority of the people be put out and have to make other arrangements in order that we may pander to a few who want Saturday morning off? That is what it amounts to. The bank officers do not kill themselves in the 35 hours they work during the week.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They work 40 hours.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They do not work 40 hours a week, and the hon. member will find that is so if he makes inquiries. He may be counting the lunch hour; but that is not considered when reckoning the hours of work.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: No award includes the lunch hour.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is so. What these people want is a five-day week. This proposal will affect working people as much as it will affect business people.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: No crocodile tears, please.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In the main, the majority of the workers are working at a great distance from banks, and it is impossible for them to do their banking business during the lunch hour on Friday. It is convenient for them to attend the banks on Saturday morning and do what business they have to. A builder may be employed at Scarborough, while his account is in the savings bank at Victoria Park. It would be necessary for this man to come all the way from Scarborough to Victoria Park during the lunch hour on Friday if he desired to do any banking business.

The Chief Secretary: We had the same arguments against the abolition of Friday night opening.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: This measure would affect the working man as much as it would the business man. The majority of workers are paid on Friday night, and they would have no opportunity of conducting any banking business if banks were closed on Saturday morning.

The Chief Secretary: They have not much to bank after they pay their bills.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There are a great number of working people who do bank their money on Saturday, and I see no reason why they should be inconvenienced. There would be a greater number of people who bank on Saturday than there are bank employees who want this Bill.

This is not the sort of provision we want in our democracy. It is not the kind of thing that will make Australia a great nation. It is certainly not conducive to advancement in a nation when employees of firms start considering the least amount of time they can work for the greatest reward. If they do that, it is the end of us. Australia was not built along those lines; it was built on long hours of work and service being rendered for the reward received. The attitude of younger people today is to do as little as possible for as much money as they can get. I would no more support the Bill than I would think of flying to the moon.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [5.26]: Most reforms meet with opposition. Because one establishment wishes to close on Saturday morning, it does not mean that all establishments in the world must do the same. When reforms are made, it is necessary for the procedure to be taken a step at a time. By interjection, a member said that there was a time not far distant when people were convinced that shops must remain open until 10 o'clock on Friday night, or else business could not be done.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: All the shops in Tasmania are closing on Saturday.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I know a man on the Goldfields who had been working in a shop in Coolgardie. It was necessary for him to work every Saturday night while other people were in the city enjoying themselves. He pointed out to me that every Saturday night someone decided at the last moment to buy groceries, and this resulted in the boss insisting on his harnessing the horse and delivering the goods late on Saturday nights. This was done to suit perhaps one particular lady. There is always someone who requires extra service.

If there is one reform that we should all enjoy, it is Saturday morning off. All people do not waste their leisure. If more people had Saturday morning off, I feel sure we would find, if we drove around the suburbs, that homes would be better kept, gardens would be better cared for, more renovations would be carried out and there would be a greater home-sense generally. This would be so because men and women would use their leisure to good purpose. Do not let us quote the odd one who does not use his leisure well. Mr. Baxter said we must have long hours of work.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Well, the hon. member said that we must have plenty of work in order to make Australia a great nation. Surely we are going to have more leisure as a result of the advances being made in our accounting machines, and so on. Every day we are being told that these machines have short-circuited the necessity for increased work. We must have eliminated the need for numbers of clerks because of these advanced accounting systems.

It is quite apparent that most of the money made on Saturday cannot be deposited in the banks, because they close at 11 a.m. I use the banks on Saturday mornings, but I am sure I would be able to adjust myself. At one time we thought we required petrol at all hours of the day and night, but we adjusted ourselves to the changed circumstances.

There seems to be a certain selfishness in the opposition to the measure, particularly when it comes from those who have Saturday morning off and are able to play golf, attend the beaches or work around the garden at home. They are not prepared, however, to make available a similar privilege and amenity to those who work in banks. If these people were accorded Saturday morning off they would return to their work refreshed, and be in a position to afford a far better service to the public.

There is no doubt that bank officers do provide a great service to the public; they are always willing to undertake work which is requested of them. To overcome the difficulty of money having to be kept over the week-end, night boxes could be provided in which cash could be deposited. I am one who likes to give to others what I enjoy myself. Mention was made by somebody that during these days of full employment people are inclined to seek those jobs where they can get more time off.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Do you work only five days a week?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I work on Saturdays and Sundays, but that is not to say I wish to forbid others the privilege of having their Saturdays free. Walking along Wellington-st., I saw notices on warehouses to this effect, "Boys wanted. No Saturday work." The words "No Saturday work" were in large letters, indicating that Saturday employment is a barrier to securing youths. It would be a barrier to my accepting employment. I know, too, that girls look for employment in places where they have to work only five days, even though the money is a little less.

It is said that stock firms are open on Saturdays. I tried to do business with one on a Saturday. It was not a wise decision, but that was the only day I could do the business at the time. I found that only skeleton staffs were employed; and I was not made too welcome—rightly so, in my

opinion. Why should those people have to work? Even insurance offices had not much staff. I had to do business with an insurance office, but it was conveyed to me that little or no work was done on Saturday. However, I was able to do all I wanted to do on the Monday, and I think that would apply to banking.

In order that an unselfish attitude may be adopted and that there may be a policy of giving unto others what we desire for ourselves, let us ensure that bank officers are given a holiday on Saturday. In a short time we would be able to adjust ourselves to the circumstances. People will bank on a Friday night or a Monday morning, or even during the lunch hour. I believe there are savings groups.

About 25 or 30 years ago I worked in the Civil Service and there were big boxes, like pillar boxes, into which we could put our 5s., 10s. or £1 per week. We dropped them into the slot in much the same way as letters are posted, and the bank officers would visit the boxes once a week and take out the contents. The money was deposited in envelopes. I do not think that they bore the names of the depositors concerned but merely the account numbers, and the bank books were adjusted fortnightly or monthly. Something like that could be done in this connection. It is with pleasure that I support the second reading.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central [5.32]: I oppose the measure. The bank officers are a class in the community whom we might style as the aristocrats of the white collar brigade. Most of these young fellows pick on banking as a profession with the motive of some day becoming bank managers.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Is that any reason why they should be doing—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. L. C. DIVER: As regards qualifications, I do not think they have to have those that are needed by many of the professional staffs in other offices in this city. If they are successful, and the day comes when they are sitting in the managerial chair with their feet comfortably poised under the table—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Like some successful farmers.

The Chief Secretary: You are getting dramatic.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: If on that occasion they have before them some farmer who has worked seven days a week, I am wondering whether they will have any conscience trouble, or whether the men of the younger brigade are going to throw off what has been known to the older people as a conscience. I wonder whether they will say, "I cannot help what you have to do for a livelihood. I got this position simply through an Act of Parliament from a lot of people—or a few people, I should

say—who happened temporarily to represent the community, and, while they were in that position, allowed their feelings to take possession of them and to overrule their better judgment."

Hon. J. D. Teahan: A farmer retires at 50 now.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: It is amazing to hear that farmers retire at 50 now. That brings me to the very question I want to lead up to—the question of economics. One would think that before attaining the status of managers, our bank officers would have to pass some test in economics; and that when they reached their goal, they would be in a position to advise not only farmers but everyone in the community what was the right thing to do as far as our country is concerned, as well as on their banking position.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are not speaking to the Bill but about the managerial staffs of the banks.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I take it that the managers will enjoy the half-day off if this Bill is successful, and they would be vitally interested.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And you say they do not need to have any ability. That is what you said.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The policy for the vast majority is dictated in the form of a circular letter. When overdrafts are to be reduced, the information comes through a circular letter from the head office; and if one talks to the average banker on economics, it is amazing what he cannot tell one.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is rot!

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Is it?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: He has got to be a student not only of economics but of human nature and everything else.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: He should be. I grant the hon. member that he should have those qualifications.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You must have had a bad deal at some time or other in your life.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I am speaking from bitter experience, and perhaps it is standing me in good stead in this debate.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I do not think you really want to deny them Saturdays off.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Once we have given bank officers a statutory five-day week, what right would we have to deny the same privilege to workers in retail shops?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: None at all.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Why not a four-day week?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Tasmania has it.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: What would members who interject tell us later on if the farmer said, "I have had this. I will work a five-day week, too."? Suppose the opening rains of the season came on a Friday morning or a Friday afternoon, and he could not go into the field with his machinery and the ground dried out quickly—perhaps I am speaking over the heads of the interjectors!—and on Monday morning the ground had completely dried out so that at the end of the season, instead of getting his normal quota of crop, he had to go to the bank and say, "I am sorry. I have nowhere near the quota I anticipated. Rain came at the week-end, as it will do in cycles; and unfortunately the land was not suitable to work, and I could not get my crop in. To make matters worse, when I was running up against my cropping programme, I had a break, and it was on a Friday afternoon and I could not get any parts from the metropolitan area until Wednesday of the following week."

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You cannot do it now.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I say it can be done, and I want to preserve that position.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Will the banks—
The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. L. C. DIVER: If the hon. member will try to follow what I am saying—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I have.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will ask the hon. member to refrain from interjecting.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Once having agreed to this procedure, we have no right to deny the rest of the community the same privilege. Having done that, what right have we to expect the trams to run, or to ask people to work in hotels on Saturday?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They have awards from the Arbitration Court.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: These people want only a 50 per cent. Utopia; they want the other half of the people to work for them. They want to see the day come when there will be a workers' Paradise and an employers' Hell.

The Chief Secretary: Do you not want to see a workers' Paradise?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yes; I want equality all round.

The Chief Secretary: That is all we are asking for.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: That is what I want to see. In the last century a British statesman said it would be interesting to see how Labour would react when it obtained the power it sought. I say that now is the acid test. Now is the time when the people

here who represent Labour can hold the scales of justice equally between employers and employees.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Hear, hear! I agree.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I wish the hon. member would act on that principle. There is one other point. The doors of banks are open for 27½ hours per week at present. Now it is suggested that they shall be open for 25.

The Chief Secretary: One hour would be sufficient for me to do my banking!

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Perhaps. However, we are not here to pass legislation for the Chief Secretary, but for the people we represent. That is the whole trouble with this debate. People are looking at the matter from the point of view of how it affects them personally, and not how it affects the community.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is what you are doing.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I am here to speak for the community as a whole, and that is what I have done all the time.

The Chief Secretary: A very narrow community.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: It is that section—the depositors—that enables the wheels to keep going around. Without it, I wonder what would happen. For many years there was no doubt that the workers had a very tough time. With the passage of the years, they kicked to the goal for which they had been striving. Having now attained to their objective, they are not capable of telling us what is best for the community. All they wish to do is to say to the community, "We want that particular thing. It does not matter at whose cost, or who has to make the sacrifice—we want those conditions." That is no good for the country or for the individuals concerned. It will ultimately lead to their damnation.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.44]: I support the Bill. I remember that many years ago there was a 40-hour week on the Goldfields.

Members: A 44-hour week.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Who is making this speech?

Hon. H. Hearn: Start again.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It was a 48-hour week; and in the business section, shops were open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Saturday they were open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Only recently, my cousin, Mr. W. Pope—one of the leading butchers in Perth—was talking with me about the butchering trade, at the time he used to work for Collins & Co. at Trafalgar from 1901 to about 1908. At that time his hours were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Saturdays they were from 4 a.m. to 12 midnight.

Hon. H. Hearn: Are you on ancient history?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am just working up. When the Saturday night work was cut out the butchers said, "We will all go broke. The businessmen cannot run it." Anyhow, they got down to 6 o'clock closing, and the business people still carried on, and the worker was fitter to do his work, and turned out more work because he had the six hours up his sleeve. Later they started work at 9 o'clock and finished at 5 o'clock. Again there was a cry from the business people that they would go broke; but they did not. They are still carrying on, and now in the butchering trade they work from 9 o'clock to 4 o'clock, I think; and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is why meat is dear.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: They are doing just as well today as they did then. Meat is dear on account of the increased cost of living.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I take it the hon member will couple up his remarks with banking.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. That is why I say we must be fair to these banking people. They are seeking to have their hours reduced and so come into line with the road boards and municipalities. I was responsible for moving for a 40-hour week in the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council. The 40-hour week has since operated there, and there has been no growl from the people.

Why cannot we give the bank employees the Saturday mornings off so that they can come down to the beaches with their families on the weekends and enjoy healthy recreation instead of living out in the bush? This has proved satisfactory in the mining industry. Today we have not as many miners suffering from silicosis as we used to have, simply because they have the Saturday morning off. They are far healthier than if they had to work in the pit every day. The shorter the hours, the better the individual. I am pleased that this Bill has been brought forward to give someone a privilege that I think everyone is entitled to. One member wanted to know whether Mr. Teahan got Saturday or Sunday off. I do not think many of us in the country get Saturdays off.

Hon. H. Hearn: Because you do not do any work.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not know. We travel a lot and we earn the little we get. I hope the time will come when we will get Saturdays and Sundays off. I support the Bill, and I hope it will be carried.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [5.50]: I think the tenor of the debate has departed somewhat from the principle of the Bill.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I agree with you on that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Unfortunately it has led to some extent to a criticism of bank officers. I would like it clearly understood that I have no criticism to make but, on the contrary, commendation to offer on the profession of banking. I think that the young men who go into the banking profession do so with the idea of entering as juniors; and, as Mr. Diver said—with this part of his speech I agree—in the hope that one day they will become bank managers and derive for themselves and their wives and families security in the community.

Unfortunately the question of whether a bank officer shall have a certain degree of qualification has also entered into the debate. But that question, I think, is far removed from the portent of the Bill. The bank officer, from the time he enters a bank, gathers his experience slowly through the years. I do not think that is limited to banking. There are many institutions in our community where young men similarly gather their experience and knowledge as they go through life.

The Chief Secretary: Like politicians.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Unfortunately some politicians go through life without gathering much knowledge. Do we not, on this Bill, have to decide one of two issues—whether, on the one hand, the bank officers should be entitled to a five-day week; and, on the other, whether the community is in a condition where it can stand the banks being closed on Saturdays so that the bank officers can have the five-day week?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Of course it can!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will not take any notice of the hon. member because—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Do not say it!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:—quite apart from the fact that, in my opinion, he did not give us a very good case, I am endeavouring to build it up a little for him.

Hon. H. Hearn: Before you knock it down.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. I asked him whether he knew, from his own experience, that much banking was done on Saturday mornings. He tripped himself up by saying that he did not think much was done.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I gave you the instances where it was not, and where it could not be.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The hon. member then went on to say that skeleton staffs were employed on Saturday mornings in the insurance companies, where

not much business was done. When I asked him, by logical interjection, whether that could not be so in the case of the banks, he said, "I will come to that shortly," but he sat down before he came to it.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: If I could explain that to you—

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If I could interject on the hon. member for a moment, I would like to continue. I would willingly subscribe to the idea of shortening the working week for bank officers if I thought it was logical. The decision I have to make, as a member of this Chamber, is whether or not it is logical. All one has to do is to walk through the streets of Perth or through our suburbs on Saturday mornings—I feel confident that Mr. Barker has done this—to see the terrific volume of business that is transacted in the shops, in the banks, and in practically every other form of industry.

The Chief Secretary: You used to see that just the same in the shops on Friday nights.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That particular argument can easily be dealt with. I know of certain country centres where the shops are still open on Saturday afternoons; where they close on Wednesday afternoons. But surely that is a matter for the district in question to decide for itself.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Did they manage—

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Why does not the hon. member give me a go for a minute?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I am trying to help you.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The hon. member is not helping me at all. Surely that is a matter for the district in question to decide. Country members will probably bear out that such decisions have been reached in certain country areas; but in the interests of the community, I do not think it would be a good idea to close the banks on Saturday mornings.

In conclusion, might I say that I believe Mr. Barker is sincere in submitting the Bill, which was introduced in another place by a private member who was formerly employed in a bank. I think this is the second occasion that we have had a Bill similar to this before us, and the last time it was presented here a majority of the members voted against it. It appears to me that on at least one side of this House a unanimous conclusion will be reached and that support will be given to the Bill.

I repeat that I would like to find it possible to give the employees of banks a five-day week, but I cannot do so in

the interests of the community. Quite apart from anything else, I think that is what members have to decide for themselves. I received from one member of the community a threatening letter directing me to support the Bill. The writer said, "If you support this Bill you will get more votes than you will receive by not supporting it." Having read the letter twice, to make sure of its contents, I conveyed it to the wastepaper basket which, I thought, was its rightful place.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You were quite right. You would not take any notice of it.

The PRESIDENT: Contempt of Parliament.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so; it was contempt of Parliament. Unfortunately these things occur. Recently I was in Bunbury.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect this with the Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What I am about to say is well connected with the Bill. The member of another place who introduced the Bill there, wrote personal letters to bank clerks in Bunbury urging them to vote for the Labour candidate so as to ensure the passage of the Bank Holidays Bill. That is the sort of thing that goes on; and that does not bring me one scrap closer to supporting something which my conscience tells me that, in the interests of the community, I should not support. Therefore, I do not propose to support the Bill.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.57]: I have a most intense objection to a Bill of this type. It is a restrictive Bill. A lot of specious argument has been put forward in regard to it, because it has nothing to do with the 40-hour week. It concerns the question of whether banks shall open on Saturdays. This is not a matter which should have the support of the House. This is exactly what is going wrong with the whole of our community. We should not say to an employing firm, "You shall not open at such and such a time." In the interests of the individual, I think we should say, "You shall not work an individual more than so many hours per week." But if that employing agency desires to keep open, we should give it the opportunity to do so.

The member who introduced the Bill referred to the United States and quoted one person who said that this move had been a success there. But the United States has not got the same restrictive attitude towards certain things that we have.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: They have different legislation in each State, have they not?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes; and in the majority of the States there is no restriction on the hours during which business houses may remain open, but only on the number of hours that an individual may work per week. Many business houses keep open until well into the evening. In North Carolina, I saw the Andrew Melin stores, which are known as the Saturday stores because they keep open at that time of the week in order that those who work during the rest of the week may purchase their requirements. It is a well-known and respected establishment, and I think there would be little likelihood of restrictions of the sort contained in this measure ever being placed on houses of that type in the United States.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Do you know that 85 per cent. of the banks in New York close on Saturdays?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: This House should not consider restrictions on times of trade. We might have a responsibility to look after the health of the individuals and so restrict the time they should work; but I cannot, for one moment, subscribe to the idea that we should restrict hours of trading. I would allow business houses to open as long as they wished, because a number of individuals in the community would appreciate part-time work in many of the stores in Perth. Yet we make the position so restrictive that that cannot happen. I have told members what happens in the United States of America; and that is why their people, and the nation as a whole are succeeding. We are getting into economic difficulties because of the restrictions we are imposing on all sides. I dislike this measure.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [6.31]: This is a measure which one might pass by without saying anything about it at all because it simply purports to do what the Government announced it would do—that is, contribute £150,000 to the foundation of a medical school provided the public raised a similar sum, and later the public was asked to raise a sum for the endowment of research.

On the other hand, I think it calls for comment. First of all, the public keenly appreciated what appeared to be a handsome gesture by the State Government in allocating the sum of £150,000 towards the

formation of a medical school. But it does not look like a handsome gesture to me. I suppose the University of Western Australia does not mind where the money comes from so long as it receives the finance and is able to spend it for the purpose for which it is intended. But on the other hand, it does bring some doubts to mind; and I think the Government owes it to us to allay some of the doubts that might arise from the manner of giving this £150,000.

When making the announcement, the Government also stated that it would be prepared to provide the annual fee of £100,000, or roughly that sum, for the maintenance of the medical school. If this year the Government finds that it cannot meet the payment of £150,000 as promised, for the foundation of the school, does it make us feel cheerful about the guarantee of £100,000 for the annual maintenance? I say this quite advisedly, and knowing exactly what I am saying and the repercussions it may have, because I was on the first advisory committee that approached the Senate of the University with the idea of forming a medical school.

I sensed then that there was a considerable feeling of doubt in the minds of some of the others, particularly the professors associated with other branches of the university, that the coming of this medical school might, in certain circumstances, endanger the status of other branches of teaching. It became quite clear to many of us that unless this sum of money to be set aside for the maintenance of the medical school was something that could be guaranteed, almost outside the annual university grant, there would be some objections to the formation of a medical school in Western Australia. But with the giving of the grant by the Government—it looked quite a handsome one—it seemed that the school would be founded and the fears and doubts were allayed.

Since the method of finding the money has been made known, some of those doubts have cropped up again. I hope they have no foundation whatever; because, unless the medical school is started in Western Australia with the highest aims in view and is maintained at a high level I, personally, would rather not see it started at all. There are many who would join with me in asking that this guarantee of a sum of money for maintenance be set beyond the annual grant for the university.

At the moment there are some other doubts which I think should be cleared up. When introducing the Bill the Chief Secretary said that the money which was being raised by the public was for the purpose of research and the purchase of equipment. I think that should be defined quite clearly, because in the report of the advisory committee to the Premier the equipment required to start the medical school was accounted for in the £300,000 which was regarded as necessary for the com-

mencement of the school. Therefore the sum of money which will be taken out of the £250,000 being subscribed by the public must only be, if it be at all necessary, for the equipment for research and not for the foundation of the school. The sum of money subscribed will not go very far when spent on research work, and I think the public is entitled to know exactly where the money will go and who will be in charge of the disbursement of it.

There are two schools of thought which exist among those who are interested in this project. The first is that this sum of money which has been subscribed by the people can be expended over a certain number of years—maybe five, or maybe 10—and after that length of time the school will be so established that research will be maintained by influential bodies who will have become interested in it. But there are others who believe that the best method of continuing research at the university would be to put the money into a trust fund and to use only the interest.

Then we would like to know whether the authority for spending it would be vested in the hands of the Faculty of Medicine or the University Senate. There are others who suggest that a body of trustees be appointed to whom application should be made for any approach to the fund. These are matters which deserve a statement from the Government. We have almost raised the required sum, and I have no doubt at all that it will be raised. But I believe we have reached the time when some definite statement as to how these things will be governed should be made.

In the report of the advisory committee there is a statement regarding the salaries to be paid to the professors to be appointed to the school. I am sorry to say I do not quite understand the significance of some of the figures attached to some of the proposed salaries. The salary of a professor on the medical side of the proposed school is set down at £3,500, plus £350 superannuation, plus £88 payroll, a total of £3,938. I do not know whether that £350 is to be paid by the professor or by the University Senate, or whether the payroll tax, which I take it "payroll" means, is paid automatically by the Senate.

It appears that this is to be so because the advertisement for professor of medicine, appearing in the "Australian Medical Journal," set down the salary at £3,500, and stated that superannuation is based on the F.S.S.U. If this means a reduction in salary, it is most unwise, because I have it on quite good authority that the Sydney Medical School is advertising for a professor of medicine at a salary of £4,000 per annum. Therefore we would not be in the same field; and, ours being a young school, we could not expect to ask a man to come in on a smaller salary than that offered by a school of such repute as the Sydney Medical School. These are the things that leave a certain amount of doubt in the

minds of some of us who are so keenly and deeply interested in the formation of a medical school.

There is also one point that I noticed in the advertisements and I trust will not occur. It is to the effect that if the professor of anatomy is not a medical man, his salary shall be so much less than if the occupant of the chair of anatomy were a medical man. There are possibly only a few men in the scientific world today who could fill the chair of professor of anatomy without holding medical qualifications, and it would be a pity if the man appointed to this school did not hold the qualifications of a medical degree. He will play such an important part in the foundation and the teaching at the school, and it is all the more important that he hold a medical degree.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: He could, as a professor, be a medical man holding a degree, or he need not have it. Is that the position?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes. The point is that either man will be accepted. If he has a medical degree they will pay him a higher salary. If the appointee is purely a scientist, and not a medical man, he will be paid a lower salary than if he had a medical degree. I believe that if the professor of anatomy were a medical practitioner he would have a much greater influence at the new medical school than if he were a scientist not in possession of a medical degree.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I trust also that arrangements are being made, through the University Senate, to interview those people we might require to fill some of the more senior professorial chairs. I know that advertisements have been issued, probably far and wide, for the benefit of all those interested in applying for posts in our medical school; but there are many in our community who have the feeling that whilst such posts may appeal to the young highly-trained medical man—probably quite gifted in the art of teaching—he might not be the type of person we think should fill the chair and do what is required in the building of a medical school.

In other words, it is felt that we might have to approach a man we want and ask him to take the chair. It might be necessary to approach one of the older and more senior men at present holding a professorial chair—a man who has had experience in conducting a medical school—to come to Western Australia to assist us in the foundation of our medical school.

It may be all very well to accept the application of a young man who might perform a very good and useful job in filling that chair; but at the commencement of a school, it appears to many that

the one who is required is that man who has already had experience in the administration of a medical school. Therefore I trust that at the same time as applications are being called for, some thought is being given to the type of person in the more senior group whom we require, and to asking him to accept, even for a few years, the office of professor of medicine or one of the senior chairs.

Certain aspects of this medical school interest one. The requirements of the King Edward Memorial Hospital have not been met as far as the teaching of midwifery is concerned, and I understand that those in charge have been told that there is no money available for that purpose at the moment. I also understand that at one time the suggestion was made that they could have £50,000 a year; and in saying that, I want members to realise that there are many more patients in the King Edward Memorial Hospital than was originally intended. However, even this £50,000 does not appear to have materialised.

Yet only a week or so ago a Minister—I think it was the Minister for Housing—announced that £100,000 was to be made available to the Alexandra Home to increase the existing accommodation. I have not the slightest objection to that home receiving money, because it is giving excellent service to the community. Surely, however, an established midwifery hospital must have priority when it is realised that eventually it will be one of the places where our medical students will receive part of their training. Unless some active steps are taken in the near future to increase the number of beds at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, I cannot see that it will be able to continue its work, especially in regard to training future medical students.

In calling for applications from persons to fill the professorial posts, there are certain preliminary tasks to be undertaken by those of us who live in this part of the world. I know it is distressing to some individuals to feel that no real start is being made towards laying down a basis for this school until such time as these professors arrive. I am afraid we are going to find ourselves in the position of having a number of qualified men yearning to commence teaching work and so on; but instead, they will be forced to plan their departments for about 12 months at least before they can commence their teaching duties. If we are to make a start with this medical school—as is intended early in 1957—we must do something now to establish a basis for teaching.

For example, one of the matters that must be taken into consideration is that in this State there are many medical men who hold honorary positions in two hospitals. It does not appear to be possible that they will be able to continue doing so once a medical school commences, because

the call on them by the medical school will be fairly heavy, and to carry out that work in addition to what they are already doing in two hospitals will be almost impossible. Also, some reorganisation of the honorary staff of those hospitals might well be considered long before a professor or any occupant of a chair arrives in this State.

I understand, and I hope it is quite true, that an advisory committee—a different one from the committee advising the Premier—is to meet fairly soon to consider some of the problems; but that committee and a number of individuals capable of giving advice on the problems I have just outlined will be faced with a great deal of active work. Thus I applaud the introduction of this measure because it brings the medical school so much nearer. However, it seems to me that there are a number of aspects yet which should be grappled with at this stage.

Although the public have shown magnificent generosity with their contributions in their willingness to establish a medical school in Western Australia, that is only a commencement; that only makes a medical school possible.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Has any provision been made to include a chair of preventive medicine among the professorial chairs?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: There is no reference to a chair of preventive medicine in the advisory committee's report. I mentioned this point in my Address-in-reply speech and pointed out then that the Premier, in his platform speech only three years ago, stated that it was his intention to bring to this State the best person he could find to establish preventive medicine on a sure and sound footing.

All this measure contemplates is that the two directors who will receive their salaries—in part from the university, in part from the Royal Perth Hospital, and in part from the trustees of the Coronation Gift Fund—will have an association with the Public Health Department. I have said before that I doubt very much that these people trained in prophylactic medicine will be the best that it is possible to obtain to advise on preventive medicine in their department. So I can tell Mr. Lavery that no real mention has been made about establishing a chair of preventive medicine; and yet its establishment must play a tremendous part in the future of the citizens of this State.

I regret very much that the opportunity has not been taken of adding a chair of preventive medicine to the posts that are to be made available in our medical school. The amount called for would not be great. I think at least half of the cost of the department of preventive medicine could be made available, without any difficulty, under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act in which there are already

sections, inserted by this House, which allow the appropriation of moneys for the purpose of investigating the prevention and cause of accidents and the rehabilitation of the injured worker, not one penny of which has been spent nor has any been raised.

So to establish a chair of preventive medicine in our medical school would require only a small amount from the profit of workers' compensation insurance. It would do a very great deal towards lifting our school into the higher ranks of medical schools in Australia. I think only one centre or possibly two centres at present are doing anything in regard to the teaching of preventive medicine to their students.

I also put forward a plea that, with the introduction of this undergraduate school, we should give consideration to the formation of a post-graduate school. It is just as essential to teach medical men in the country districts and in the suburbs recent advances in medicine as it is to teach undergraduates. Although that is always possible in a medical school because post-graduate work is part of its curriculum, I think we could give service to those outside Australia by the formation of a post-graduate school. I would like to see such a school extend its activities by being accepted under the Colombo Plan, and students from India, Ceylon, Asia and Singapore could learn much from such a school that is impossible to learn now in their own countries.

As I said before, I was very struck by the statement by the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Sir John Kotelawala that he was constantly under pressure from those practising indigenous medicine in Ceylon on the need for increased medical education for those qualified men practising within Ceylon. Such a feeling exists in all those countries which are our neighbours; and I believe that if we approached this matter properly, we could receive support under the Colombo Plan which we would not do if we simply initiated post-graduate training—which already exists in this State—as part of the ordinary medical school work.

Again I would suggest to the Government that it give very serious consideration to this matter, because if ever there was a time when we, who have all the facilities, should feel ourselves bound to spread that knowledge to nations who have not the knowledge, it is now. If we did make an offer to those countries under the terms I have suggested, it would mean much not only to our own consciences, but also to the general health and well-being of those in neighbouring countries, and would materially assist in fostering friendly relations between us. I repeat that it would do us a tremendous amount of good. I make this statement in all sincerity.

It is believed by some that individual teaching is obtained in a small school from a highly gifted professor. In truth, the highly gifted professor who desires a small audience is a myth. He gives his best to a large audience rather than a small one. Any member of this House who has been called upon to travel long distances and speak to an audience of a few, will realise how little of his knowledge he imparts compared with occasions when he speaks to a hall full of people. The same applies to the professorial staff. Generally, they are gifted in the English language and in the knowledge of the subject they are dealing with. The way they impress audiences is by their manner of speech. At times, they add considerably to the knowledge gained by students by their quips and phrases, which are remembered long after they have left the teaching schools.

If the numbers in the proposed school can be increased by inviting students from countries close to us to attend a post-graduate unit, then we can appeal to professors who have built up schools in other parts of Australia. I say in conclusion that there are many facets to the medical school which must be started, and started very soon, if we are to carry on the training of medical students, as anticipated, in the early part of 1957.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 26th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. E. M. Davies in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 26th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. L. A. Logan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 316A added:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Chief Secretary undertook to reply to some of the points I raised in regard to infectious diseases.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Dr. Hislop raised a few points during the second reading debate, one of which relates to the payment of hospital costs for persons treated for infectious diseases. He suggested it might be as well to absolve local authorities altogether from their contribution. The reason, of course, that local authorities have some responsibility in this regard is that the suppression of these diseases is a local authority responsibility. To some degree freedom from incidence of these diseases in a local authority district may be considered a measure of the activity of the local authority.

One of the fundamental tasks of a local authority is to encourage immunisation against diphtheria. If a child has been inoculated against diphtheria, then the local authority must be considered to have done its duty. If that person subsequently contracts diphtheria it is believed only fair to exempt the local authority from contributing towards the cost of hospital treatment. If, on the other hand, the person was not immunised against diphtheria the local authority is required to contribute.

The new financial arrangements between local authorities and the department, as set out in the Bill, are in conformity with a scheme which was considered by all local authorities. An overwhelming majority of local authorities have expressed themselves as being in favour of the scheme.

Under the proposed arrangement, where immunisation has been carried out, the local authority would be exempted from payment. If all local authorities were absolved from these costs, some of them might not worry about immunisation; but, knowing that costs will be charged where immunisation has not been carried out, they will take the steps suggested in the Bill.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The other point I mentioned was that, while the local authority can be exempted, the person who has become immunised and protected himself receives no rebate of hospital charges if he contracts an infectious disease. This Bill appears to be designed to give relief to local authorities that encourage immunisation, but not to the individual who has complied with the precautions for the general good.

It might be a gesture to exempt from hospital costs those who have been inoculated and who subsequently contract an infectious disease. Otherwise, the anti-social person would not worry about inoculation because he would not have to pay any more for treatment than one who had been inoculated. I would ask that the person who has protected himself by inoculation be exempted from hospital

costs; but the person who has disobeyed public conscience in regard to inoculation should bear the burden of such expenses. It seems unfair that local authorities should be able to get a rebate, but the individual cannot get any consideration even though he might have subjected himself to inoculation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It might have been better if the procedure had been altered by exempting the individual rather than the local authority. There is a lot of force in that argument. However, the department has taken the view contained in the Bill.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I could not care less about the departmental view, if we think something is right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so; but the department has been negotiating with the local authorities on this matter. The point raised by Dr. Hislop was not brought up by the local authorities. Had that been done, the suggestion might have been acted upon. The Bill is a step further in the direction of treatment for infectious diseases. Next year another step may be taken on the lines suggested by Dr. Hislop.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Evidently the discussion on this Bill took place between the local authorities and the Government department, and agreement was reached to exempt the former from hospital costs under certain conditions, and to put the expense on to the individual.

The Chief Secretary: That is not so.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: The individual has to pay now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The local authority is exempted in certain cases.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: They both pay, but a local authority can be exempted in certain circumstances.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Local authorities can be relieved from payment, but the individual cannot. Of course, Government departments will look after themselves. We should look after the individual. It is no fault of individuals that these infectious diseases occur. The Chief Secretary should draw the attention of the Minister for Health to the fact that we consider it very unfair to charge the individual while giving relief to the people of the district collectively. In all these matters things are put over members very easily by the department. For instance, the references to poliomyelitis, diphtheria, dysentery and infantile diarrhoea are plain enough, but I do not know what infective hepatitis is.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Jaundice.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then why not say jaundice and we would understand it. What is murine typhus?

Hon. J. G. Hislop: A kind of typhus.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know what salmonella infection is.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: A bowel infection.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We who pass these laws do not know the meaning of the terms employed, and yet the people we represent are faced with a penalty for not reporting them as infectious diseases. How can the public know? The Government should ask the department to use language that can be readily understood by laymen.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The individual would not know whether he was suffering from one of these diseases—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not until the doctor told him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then he would know.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But he would not know whether it was a notifiable disease.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The doctor would tell him that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does the doctor advise a patient when he is suffering from an infectious disease?

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Yes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir Charles thinks we are imposing on the individual some charge that he has not previously borne. These charges were in operation when the hon. member was a Minister.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I was referring to murine typhus, salmonella infection and infective hepatitis.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is the doctor's responsibility to notify such cases, so the individual need not worry. This is a step in the right direction to relieve somebody—namely, the local authority.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The individual should be relieved first of all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot argue that point.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You would if you were occupying a seat on this side of the Chamber.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Let us get this established and next year the chances are that the additional relief may be granted.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If there is a change of Government, it will be put right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is remarkable that the Government with which the hon. member was associated did nothing during its six years of office.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes, we did.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Government is doing something now, but the hon. member wants something more. Possibly the other step will be taken next year.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: In my early married life immunisation was not what it is today and two of our sons had diphtheria. At that time the local authorities stood the expense, but today the position is different.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to keep to the clause.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I shall do so. Social service is supposed to be for the benefit of the people as a whole, but they are being by-passed and sent from one department to another, and they do not know what their position is when it comes to payment for hospitalisation. Dr. Hislop has pointed out that the local authority is now being given certain relief, and seemingly parents are not to receive any relief. Infectious diseases affect the life of the general community, and I consider that the whole charge should be met by the Health Department and that parents should not be called upon to bear any part of the cost.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: When I was a member of the Kalgoorlie Council, I understood that in cases of this sort the local authority was responsible for the payment of the hospital charges. Is it the intention now to impose the full charge on the patient?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Section 323A added:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is extraordinary that some intermediate body such as the Hospital Collection Service has to be brought into being in order to collect the money for the care of patients in hospital. I hope that the Chief Secretary will explain what function this service renders.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot give any more information than is contained in the Bill. This body has been created to collect the charges. Evidently the department has not the means to do so, and it is necessary to make someone responsible for it.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is very complicated.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Perhaps it is not so complicated as it seems. If a weakness is discovered in the system, a change can be made.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Section 324 amended:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Dr. Hislop expressed doubt whether local authorities could be successful in building homes for the aged. The local authorities would prefer to give assistance to people in their own homes, and they are also desirous of

creating a social centre where these people might meet and perhaps be served with a meal.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Someone to take charge of them?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; it would be a social gathering, and perhaps one or two people who had not homes could stay there. A local authority could make arrangements for one or two to live there, but it could not finance the building and maintenance of a large centre. The idea is rather to create a social atmosphere with one or two of these aged people being catered for as I have mentioned.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [8.15]: I have examined this Bill and realise that quite a lot of contention could be raised by local governing bodies in relation to their water schemes. But, having gone through the measure carefully, and having made inquiries on my own account, I believe it is wise that there should be some overall authority to control the drainage of the metropolitan area. I realise also that a number of local authorities have organised drainage plans in hand or plans in mind for the draining of certain areas; but I understand that one of the greatest difficulties in the metropolitan area in this regard is due to the water table which rises and falls in various areas according to the increase in population.

While a plan may be started in one area, it might well affect the water table in a neighbouring or even a distant district. This is exemplified at the moment at Dog Swamp, in Charles-st., just beyond the junction with Walcott-st. Owing to the recent rains, the water table there has risen considerably, and will now call for an extension of the drainage system.

This situation apparently ensues when areas are opened up for home-building, because when the trees are removed the water balance is considerably altered, and the natural type of drainage of underground water is in some cases grossly affected with the result that the whole of the drainage of the area in question, and perhaps neighbouring areas, calls for immediate revision.

Although I sympathise always with local authorities in regard to their plans, I believe that in these peculiar circumstances the question of drainage is one that should be dealt with, if not by an overall body taking complete charge, then at least by one which could give advice as to what is necessary throughout the metropolitan area.

The balance of the Bill, in regard to rating, could of course give rise to any amount of debate; and it seems to me—as it always does when dealing with measures of this nature—that there is an immense amount of power being put into the hands of the Minister—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Or of civil servants.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Is it not the same thing?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No; it is even worse.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: One finds that under this measure the Minister can use his discretion to override the local authorities in regard to rating, and so on. I trust there is good reason for this provision, because the mere fact that one section of the public objects to the manner of rating in its local authority area is no reason for giving so much power to a centralised body. If the people concerned do not like the method of rating, they have their redress in the next local authority election; and I would require further information about the necessity for granting these powers before agreeing to the provision. However, I will support the second reading.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [8.20]: When introducing the measure, the Chief Secretary said it was of an important nature, and I could not agree more than I do. It is a very important Bill, and one that I am pleased to see before the House.

When I was a member of another place the local authority in the constituency which I then represented brought to my attention, in no uncertain terms, the difficulty being met with owing to lack of drainage. The Government in this case has been very generous in recognising the efforts of Hon. David Brand, Minister for Works in the previous administration, and has commended him for the work he performed up to the time when the change of Government occurred. I think it has been said that the terms of this Bill are those in which the measure would have been introduced had it been submitted by Hon. D. Brand himself.

The whole of the metropolitan area between the foothills, the Canning River and the Swan River, offers a considerable drainage problem; and at this juncture, I say that the enormous housing projects of the last few years have made the drainage problem of the metropolitan area even worse. In some instances I am critical to

a degree of the Housing Commission, which appears to have gone out of its way to go further than I think was necessary into low-lying areas to construct some houses. All that is necessary to realise the truth of my contention is to travel through my province and see the result of the exceptionally wet winter that we have just experienced. We have seen people who now cannot get to their houses owing to the flooding of the areas concerned.

This fault has not been limited to the Housing Commission, however, as some builders of homes could have been more careful in the selecting of sites upon which to erect dwellings. I well remember as far back as 1950, when Hon. D. Brand was Minister for Works and took the trouble, in company with his officers, to visit the East Belmont area with me and see the difficulties that were being encountered there in the matter of drainage at that time. He also went on tours of inspection with various road boards and saw firsthand the difficulties which they, too, were experiencing in the matter of drainage.

It was—here I take a little credit unto myself—upon the representations that I made to the Minister at that time that his officers undertook a contour survey of the whole of the region, in order to determine the possibility of formulating a drainage plan and estimating the cost of implementing it. Just prior to 1953, when the general election took place, the contour survey was practically completed, and some £500,000 had been given as the estimated cost of carrying out the necessary work.

Then a change of Government took place, and the present Administration was required to carry on. The Government of the day has now brought this measure before the House in an endeavour to overcome the drainage problem in the metropolitan area. I feel confident that the road boards within the province that I represent will be pleased that the measure has been brought down.

My main query in connection with the Bill relates to the method of rating. I have read carefully the speech of the Minister who introduced the Bill in another place, and that of the Chief Secretary when introducing it here, and it seems fairly clear that an undertaking has been given that only those who receive the benefit of the drainage will be rated. But I cannot—and I think Dr. Hislop also expressed concern about this—see any way at present of assessing what the extent of the monetary obligation on people who own land in low-lying areas might be. If it is intended to keep the rating to the low-lying areas, it seems that it must be fairly high, in view of what was estimated three or four years ago to be the capital cost of the work, and that causes me some concern.

I do not think that there is any necessity for me to deal further with the measure at the moment. I am pleased to see it before the House, because the local authorities have tried conscientiously over a period of years to relieve their ratepayers of this burden and can now expect some assistance from the Government. I hope that when replying to the debate the Chief Secretary will have had an opportunity to confer with the Minister for Works, and will be able to give a more definite statement as to what the method of rating will be, and how it will be put into effect in the instances that are envisaged: I support the second reading and trust that the information I seek will be forthcoming.

On motion by Hon. F. R. H. Lavery, debate adjourned.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [8.28]: I hope this measure will be agreed to in spite of the fact that the Press has advised the public that it is expected to be defeated in this Chamber. The social power of capitalism still asserts itself by the retention of the old values in industry, in particular, and society in general. Excess profit making is still allowed as legitimate business, and the trend towards placing power in the hands of a managerial class has not loosened the bonds of class distinction.

Exploitation of the worker still exists, and is still sanctioned by the social arrangement by which a relatively small class has a prior claim on the wealth derived from capital. Price control is a fundamental of social justice. No one proposes the abolition of capital itself, but the benefits of capital should be used in the interests of every individual in the community. This to me means planning. It means planning in a democratic society, and price control is a prerequisite of a planned economy.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What authority is that to which you are referring?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: My own.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not that one.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: In the use of capital, men should be treated as human beings and not compelled by the forces of economic circumstances to see their families denied the necessities of life and social benefits that befit a really democratic society. Price control is a prerequisite to the dignity of persons to enable them to have goods and amenities commensurate with their health and happiness. After all, money is only a means of exchange. It should be distributed more equitably, and the control of prices will enable people to obtain more goods where they are needed

most in the lower-income groups. That is my summing up as to why price control should be introduced.

This morning I read the following article in "The West Australian":—

Profits at New Peak.

Company profits in 1954-55 rose to 10½ per cent. of shareholders' funds; the highest rate achieved by Australian companies since the war. This is shown in a survey made by the Commonwealth Bank. The break up of figures shows that profits of manufacturing companies—by far the largest group—rose from 10 per cent. in 1954 to 11½ per cent. of funds employed in 1955.

The wholesale and retail earnings were also well up (8.6 per cent. to 10 per cent.), as were mining earnings from 8½ to 11 per cent. A total of 358 companies were surveyed. The figures must be regarded as provisional. Dividends in relation to shareholder funds rose from 5½ per cent. to 6.2 per cent.

Hon. H. Hearn: Five per cent. is not high.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: It is high enough. It is higher than the working man is able to pay for his amenities today. Let us see where the shoe pinches most, and who suffers the greatest. One member referred disparagingly to people on wages. When I talk about workers, I mean the people in the low-income groups.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There are very few on the basic wage.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: When I talk about workers among the low-income groups, I include the old-age pensioners and the people on fixed incomes. These people are getting less value today by comparison than they ever got before. We hear about the high wages being paid. I tried to figure it out, but the nearest I could get was the figure mentioned by a member when speaking in this House. The wage is worth only £4 4s. That was a pretty low wage before this inflationary spiral came into being. The prices of the basic commodities such as clothing and boots and shoes should be controlled. Apart from their being controlled, a subsidy should be paid if it is required.

Hon. H. Hearn: Does the Premier agree with you?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The housewife is the one who suffers the most today. She has to curtail the necessities of life, and her husband and children go short as a result. Price control would help to adjust the time-payment position, which is caused by people not being able to afford the cash prices asked. All these amenities that are required in the house have their prices fixed at a very high figure. There is no competition; the prices are fixed at

the source. But members on the other side would not agree that we should fix the retail price.

The price of fares is something more that punishes the family man today. Because of this factor, he is not able to take his family for simple outings. If these matters could be supported in some way, all the better.

Let us take the other side of the picture, which deals with pressure advertising. This should be prohibited. One only has to listen to the radio to discover the huge prizes that are offered to boost commodities like soap and toothpaste. All these prices are handed down and eventually make their way to the shoulders of the working man. That is where we find it rests if we look at the economic picture.

Hon. L. C. Diver: How much is it?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I listened to the hon. member when he was pitying the poor farmers; now he should listen to me when I am talking about the workers. It is a scandal to see the prices that the housewife is asked to pay for soap and toothpaste, while at the same time we have certain firms spending thousands of pounds on pressure advertising over the radio.

Hon. L. Craig: It does not cost more than a Federal parliamentary broadcast.

Hon. H. Hearn: And it is more entertaining.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I have always listened with great interest to what Mr. Craig has had to say, but I do not agree with his remark; it is silly. The amenities of life are placed almost beyond the reach of the family man, and after all, it is by his energy that industry is kept going. No one will deny that. If there were no wage-earner there would be no industry.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What would he do?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That is not a sensible question. One hears a lot about children being neglected and women going out to work. But if people only stopped to think, they would realise that it is absolutely necessary for women to work in order to maintain their families. It is well nigh impossible to buy such amenities as a refrigerator or a stove on the wage a woman's husband receives. Apart from anything else, the food one receives from cold storage is dangerous to health.

It is becoming unknown to get really fresh food, and that is one of the matters about which I complained to the Royal Commission that was inquiring into the egg position. It is impossible to obtain fresh eggs today. Nor can one keep milk for children unless one has a refrigerator or a cooling system. These commodities are the everyday necessities of life. One cannot hark back 100 years and mention what happened then. We are living in a different age now, and we must advance with the times.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You consider the amount of beer drunk and the amount of starting price betting that is done.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The commodities to which I refer are no longer luxuries. They are necessities. Mr. Simpson quoted the price of clothing, but I notice that he gave us the price of the cheapest cotton frock which, if we got to the bottom of the matter, we would find was made in Japan. When he referred to groceries, he quoted self-help stores. But the ordinary housewife does not deal with those places. She has to go to the suburban shop; otherwise she would have to add the price of her fares to the price of the commodities she buys.

Hon. G. Bennetts: She would have no one to mind the children either.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: It is not fair to quote the prices of the cheapest lines. I am sure Mr. Simpson's wife or daughter would not wear one of the dresses to which he referred.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: These were given to me as standard lines.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I do not see why other women should be satisfied with the frocks he mentioned. They are run up in a cheap way, and I have seen a lot of that going on in the last few years. That is one of the reasons why clothing factories are glutted. There is also the question of boots and shoes, on which the price should be fixed. One gets very little in the way of good, solid leather. Nor is it at anything like a reasonable price. What about the young people who are struggling to get homes? We talk about self-help homes. If we consider plumbing charges, we will find that they are exorbitant. It is a disgrace.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: They are approved by the Prices Commissioner.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is mostly due to labour.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The working man must live. I am not saying that all the profits are the result of one plumbing job. I am pointing out the present economic system. It is a system of boom and bust. We are having the boom at the moment, but very shortly we will have the bust. Power is needed to control prices in order to stop exploitation.

I defy anybody to tell me that the worker is not being exploited. Imagine a pensioner who is receiving £3 10s. per week having to pay 7s. 9d. for a lb. of tea, which one would have to use very sparingly in order to make it last a fortnight! And a cup of tea to a pensioner is a stable item of diet. Then there are butter at 4s. 6d., eggs at 5s. a dozen, bread at 1s. 3d., and potatoes at 6s. a stone.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Housewives are going to import them, are they not?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I am talking of what is, and not of what might be done. Onions I paid 9d. per lb. for in one store; then I saw them at 2 lb. for 7d. in a market. I returned and asked the girl why she was charging 9d. in her store. She said that if she did not do so, there would be a fine by the Onion Board. That is something that the storekeeper told the girl behind the counter, and it was not true. There is no mention in the "C" series index concerning vegetables. Yet every housewife knows that vegetables constitute one of the most important items of diet. It is essential to have fresh fruit and vegetables.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is the hardest way in the world to make a living—to produce fruit and vegetables. Men and women doing so work Saturdays and Sundays, and very long hours and—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I would ask Sir Charles Latham to allow the hon. member to continue her speech without interruption.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: If I might interject: Mr. Jones defeated his own argument. He admitted that there was dishonesty in trading; yet he will probably refuse to vote for a means of controlling it. His whole argument was meant to oppose price control, yet his reasoning was so weak that he destroyed his argument.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I was speaking about the butchering trade only. The hon. member would admit that, if she would only speak the truth for once.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Why should we separate butchering from the grocery trade or any other trade? I am speaking about the overall cost of living. We all know what a disgraceful racket the meat trade is. We know that it does not matter what restrictions are put on the retail trade, those concerned can break through the ceiling price at the Midland Junction saleyards and get away with anything—almost with murder! I know something about it.

I am not saying that I think the State can do everything we would wish with regard to prices. But when we see a Liberal Government in South Australia and the Governments of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania all admitting that price control is desirable, one cannot help asking why in the name of heaven we have to be always so different. Four States are in favour of price control and refuse to remove it. Yet Western Australia, which has the highest living cost of any State in Australia—

Hon. H. Hearn: And the highest basic wage.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: It is absolutely a racket in Western Australia.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: What about England, Canada, West Germany and America?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Australia is far enough for me to travel.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think it is, judging by your arguments.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Those countries cannot be much worse off than we are in Australia. The other day I went to a chemist's shop for a bottle of medicine—quite a simple mixture, which some mothers use—and I was charged an extra 6d. above the ordinary price. If anybody can tell me that there is any justice or fairness in that, I would like to hear him.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Do you propose to control that, too?

Hon. A. R. Jones: What about Russia?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: We have heard the same old argument. I have heard members use it every time they have risen to speak. The argument is that rising wages cause prices to rise. Once more I want to point out very plainly—and members know that this is true—that wages were pegged, and yet prices have soared till we have the highest cost of living in Australia. That shows that there is no analogy between the fixing of wages and the rising of prices. Yet we are told that the increased price of an article is due to a rise in the basic wage. We have seen what has happened. Surely we are not expected to be convinced against our own knowledge of what has really happened!

We have heard about the struggle that farmers have had. I have been observing some of the wills that have been left by farmers lately, and I want to stress the point that I have made before: that a farmer can work whatever hours he pleases, and he has some security; but the worker who is earning a weekly wage has nothing to rely upon but his own strength, and if that fails he is bankrupt.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Where were you in 1930 and 1931 and 1932?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That is the crucial point: The farmer is never in danger of being hungry.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Say that again!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: If he is, he should not be on a farm. If I were on a farm I would never be hungry. The farmer's family is secure against that kind of want. But a man who relies upon working for industry goes hungry if he is out of work for a month.

Hon. L. C. Diver: The farmers have made lots of sacrifices.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I know all about the sacrifices that have been made on the land. Everybody makes sacrifices under the economic system we have today. That is what I object to. It is a rotten system.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why don't you leave it?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That does not rest with me. I would be glad to leave it if I could. That has nothing to do with this argument. Why do not members opposite be constructive and tell us what to do about the situation? All that has been suggested is that the workers' wages should be cut down by 30s. a week. What a beautiful suggestion that was! A man should be ashamed to say such a thing.

An article appeared in the "The West Australian," of which I took particular notice and in which it was said that this Bill would be defeated in this Chamber. It makes one wonder, when one tries to put up a case for a Bill in this House and listens to the debate, what the public would think about the matter if they only knew what occurs here. It is not a question today of too few goods and too much money. Here is a weakness in our economic system concerning which nobody has any suggestion to offer whereby it may be bettered. We have shops full of goods, but profits are rising, and there is a great greed for excess profits. If I were Mr. Hearn, I would not laugh about that.

Hon. H. Hearn: I am laughing at it because it is such utter rot.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: It is the greed for excess profits and the exploitation of ordinary people that make price control an absolute necessity if we are going to have any stability at all.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I wish the hon. member was running a business.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: We had more stability when the Chifley Government was in power. The people deserted that Government, and we have never had stability since.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Tell us the whole story.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I would ask members to allow the hon. member to continue.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I know members do not want to listen to my arguments, but I am being honest; and I consider it is a disgrace to a country with the assets which Australia has, that we have to stand here and talk about price control. I have been around to shops and have seen the prices of frocks. Apart from those that are sold for 18s 11d. and which I would not wear—I can, at any rate afford to do otherwise now—the prices are fixed when they go into the shops. The prices of boots of a certain brand are fixed, and so are those of electrical appliances. In England complaints have been made about that, and it has been said that something must be done. Yet here we have members agreeing with such an economic system!

If they went out and saw a family that was very hard up, it would please them to unbend and be a little magnanimous and patronising towards that family. But

I consider that the dignity of the human being should mean more than anything else, and prices are wrapped up with that dignity. A man should be able to buy what he needs to keep his family in comfort. It is the bounden duty of a country to see that the people who earn its wealth have sufficient of it to maintain themselves at a good standard of living.

Hon. A. R. Jones: According to you, the boss should not.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I am not talking about the boss. I do not want smoke-screens of that kind. I am talking about the capitalistic system—a system of boom and bust.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you want communism instead?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It sounds like it.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I want socialism as I know it, which involves a fair living and a fair wage for everybody, and the sharing by the masses of the wealth which they produce, instead of stores being able to turn over millions of pounds. I read that in England there is another millionaire. What on earth does a country want another millionaire for? If £1,000,000 could be put into the hands of ordinary people and their standards thus raised, it would be much better. That is what should be done.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That millionaire supports a great number of workers.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: We hear a lot about the hard work of the farmers, but it is the worker who is grudging a place in the sun. It is always he who has to go short of anything. It is never suggested that a firm earning £10,000,000 should part with £2,000,000 of it and pass it down through the economic channels of government to pensioners, sick people, and so on. It is not suggested that it is wrong for a firm to earn £10,000,000 while the basic-wage earner cannot obtain an economic wage on which to keep himself and his wife and family in comfort.

I consider I have made out a case for price control, which is the only answer to this problem. I do not think State price control is by any means the perfect answer; but at least it could do something to stop the rot which is setting in here, and ensure that people would have enough food and clothing to lead a dignified life. This country should have a standard of living to offer to the working man which would take pride of place over that of every other country, because we have everything.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Does it not?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No; it does not. At present, the standard of the ordinary working family is grim. It is a misery to them if they get sick. We had

a health scheme under the Chifley Government; but as soon as Menzies took over, he pauperised the people again through the public hospitals. Mr. Chifley lifted the scheme of pauperisation of the out-patients of public hospitals, but the first act of the Liberal Government was to put it back again. When it brought in the means test as a means of entry to the Royal Perth Hospital, it butchered the health scheme.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I point out that the hon. member is speaking to the second reading of the Prices Control Bill.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: What I am saying comes under the Bill, because medicine is very expensive to buy. If a person is ill and goes to a doctor, he does not pay 4s. or 5s. but £2 or £3.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: He does not.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I had to go to the chemist for my grandson, and it cost me £2 13s. 6d.

Hon. H. Hearn: It does not come under price fixing.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Above all, it should be price-fixed.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Does this Bill propose to price-fix chemists?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I think our standard of living has been raised. We are in a fast-living era, and we have amenities that our mothers and grandmothers did not have. They are necessary to health under the circumstances in which we live. Because of the nervous strain of the machine age, workers need shorter hours and better food. The health of many people breaks down because they cannot get these amenities.

When the ordinary worker has to go without something, he goes without the ordinary necessities of life; he does not go without an extra holiday, or something like that. He cuts down on fruit or buys cheaper cuts of meat. Price fixing would at least stop some of the exploitation that is occurring in the suburbs. I do not say that the small retailer is getting it, but the bigger man. We should all be out to stop this exploitation, and to prevent this business of monopolising everything and fixing prices at the source. Price fixing would give the department the right to do that.

While the present position continues, we go back to the laissez faire attitude of England that had to be altered because of the imposition on the people. The working man, the pensioner and others on fixed incomes are really suffering. Their money has dwindled. We have been told to put something aside for our old age. When I was a child, the advice to save for old age was almost a catechism. What

are those people who saved getting now? The superannuation and other little things that they thought would make them comfortable are worth but little. This position has come about because of the greed for excess profits. Members can read the papers and economic reviews and they will find one thing—greed and greed.

Price fixing is a No. 1 priority. It is necessary if we want justice to be done to those in the low income groups. I pity the poor people who are trying to live on a pension. The civilian widow is one of the sufferers. Last week it cost thousands of pounds to entertain a vast concourse of people at Kwinana, because there is big money in oil. Yet we have civilian widows calling at charitable institutions, seeking help. If prices were fixed and living stabilised, these people would have sufficient to live on. A person is frightened to go into a shop. If he goes in and spends £2, he can carry in his hands practically everything he purchases.

I hope that legislation in this House will not be prejudged through the newspapers, because someone must have said it would be defeated here. When I read that in the paper, I thought how slowly we advance in the things that really matter. I commend the Bill to the House.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [9.7]: If anybody had any idea of supporting the Bill or had any sympathy towards it, I suggest it would have immediately disappeared upon hearing the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down. I have often heard in the House the expression "worker", or "working man". I have so far been unable to find anybody, even when we were considering the Workers' Compensation Bill, who could give me a definition of a worker other than the monetary provision that is included in that measure.

This puts me in mind of a Labour politician who was addressing a meeting one day. When the meeting was over, a man in the audience said that he wanted to ask a question. Perhaps Mrs. Hutchison can answer the question. This was his question: "I started work when I was 15 years of age as an apprentice in a trade. I served my apprenticeship and became a master of my trade. I continued to work for the same employer and, through the years, I made progress in the firm and became the foreman. I got on further still, until now I am the managing director of the firm. Can the speaker tell me when I ceased to become a worker?" Perhaps Mrs. Hutchison can tell me.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are camouflaging the issue.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I sat here for some minutes and listened to the tirade of abuse by the hon. member—something to which we have become so accustomed that we listen without interjecting. I think it would become her, on this occasion, if she let me make my small contribution without interruption.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You asked me to answer that question.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The hon. member could not answer it. Price fixing is a political philosophy subscribed to by the Labour Party, but not by the members of the non-Labour parties.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It is subscribed to by the Liberal Government in South Australia.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have heard Mr. Davies, on other matters, tell me that what happens in South Australia has nothing to do with what takes place in this Parliament. I would say to Mr. Davies that I have known him vote, with his party, to injure the worker on other matters.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Tell us what they are.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I cannot; the President will not let me.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are a good propagandist for your party. Why do you not speak to the Prices Bill and leave the Labour Party out?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Why does not the hon. member speak when his time comes?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I thought we were discussing the prices Bill, not the Labour Party.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Lavery will have an opportunity to speak when his time comes; and if he has anything to say in criticism of me, I can take it. In the meantime, I subscribe to the idea that price fixing is a political philosophy and it is part of the Labour Party platform.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am doing my best to address the Chair, but I am being continually interrupted. It is true that Liberal Governments in the past have introduced price-fixing continuance Bills. There have been reasons for their so doing, and I have expressed them in this House. We consider that when a country is at war and supplies of materials are short, there is a necessity to have price fixing, but we think that when supplies of materials are not short, it is time to remove price fixing from the statute book and let the law of supply and demand reign.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Yes, to rob the people just as you like.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think the hon. member should make remarks of that nature. If she is not going to keep quiet, I shall take advantage of some of the things she says. So, through you, Sir, I ask that she let me continue with my few remarks on the Bill. It is not the time to reintroduce a price-fixing Bill when supply is greater than demand.

The Chief Secretary: None of these things were operating in 1952.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: None of what things?

The Chief Secretary: Shortage of supplies, wars, and all the rest that you are speaking of.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I say that some of them were; and it was the policy of the party to which I belong to relinquish price control gradually, as supplies improved. No one knows that better than the Chief Secretary. But today we find a Bill with 63 clauses in it. In the original Bill there were about 16 or 18 clauses.

The Chief Secretary: Yes; but how many regulations?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: A lot.

The Chief Secretary: There are none to this Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so. All the regulations and penal clauses are contained in the Bill. Heavens above! Has the Chief Secretary read the Bill?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Can he see some of the things that will happen if a person is convicted of a crime under this measure? The only thing it does not say is that the stocks shall be replaced in Forrest Place; but it goes pretty near it.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Were they ever in Forrest Place?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: A great deal has been said about the profits made by General Motors Holdens. I think the figure of £10,000,000 has been mentioned.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Which is just—

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Oh dear! I went through General Motors Holdens works when in Adelaide a few months ago.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I went through them, too.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am glad the hon. member did. Probably he will agree with what I am about to say, if he took the trouble to make the same inquiries as I did. I talked to those who were responsible for the liaison between the employing company and the staff. I said to one particular man, "Do you have any industrial trouble in these works?" He said, "No." I asked, "Are your workers happy here?" and he said, "Yes, obviously, because we do not have any industrial trouble." I went right

through the assembly line and I saw a magnificent example of private enterprise.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That does not excuse them for making so much profit.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In a country like America, if a big company makes £10,000,000 profit this year and next year its profit slips to £7,500,000, do members know what happens? The union's representative goes to the employing company and says, "Is there anything wrong with this company? The profit has slipped £2,500,000. Is the employment of our men safe?" That is their major concern.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You do not know anything about it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Do I have to put up with this all the time?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member interjects quite often.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do; but not all the time.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are throwing out a lot of baits so you must get some bites.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There are plenty of big fish. However, that is the position in a country like America. Union representatives in that country are concerned with the security of employment of their men.

The Chief Secretary: Do you not think we are?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course! And does not the Chief Secretary think that we are too? Does he think that his party is the only one that is concerned for the working men?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I would like to tell the Chief Secretary, categorically, that its members are not the only people concerned with the working men of this country; but his party is the only one that tries to make as much capital out of it as possible. I am just as concerned with the affairs and future of the working man as is the Chief Secretary.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is dramatising.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am just as concerned about them as Mrs. Hutchison is. Some of the actions taken by the hon. member in this House lead me to believe that she is not so concerned about their future.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What about telling us something about prices?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We also hear that the basic wage in this State has been pegged, and much emphasis is laid upon the word "pegged". It is true that for a period of time the basic wage did not move.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Oh!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is true; and even the hon. member knows that. It did not move because the President of the Arbitration Court did not make the adjustment. But at the end of the quarter before last, we received a 5s. 11d. adjustment in Western Australia, and not long ago there was a drop of 1s. What was the reason for that? Can we rely upon the President of the Arbitration Court, or do we say that his assessment is not correct?

The Chief Secretary: That drop was not by our President.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary is half asleep, and I cannot hear him properly. The point is that the adjustment provided for a 1s. decrease. Surely that is proof that for that particular quarter the "C" series index, upon which the basic wage is adjusted, showed a drop.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Yes; it dropped.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Surely that is proof that the prices for the items in the "C" series index did not rise either!

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: But what—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know the position that obtains in many parts of my district. One has only to go to Victoria Park on a Friday afternoon—any afternoon for that matter, but a Friday in particular—or on a Saturday morning, and one can see people milling about making purchases at the various provision stores. I have talked to the people who own these shops, and they have told me that they feel confident that the people do not want price fixing; the shopkeepers themselves certainly do not want it, because they give the people a fair go. They know that they can give the people cheaper prices than they can get elsewhere. That is good for industry because it creates competition.

The Chief Secretary: It is sometimes cheap and nasty, too.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course, if anybody wants to buy any article that is cheap and nasty it is the fault of the person concerned.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We do not get anything like that in the country.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is good. Mr. Bennetts always helps me out. I do not think there is any necessity for me to elaborate on the question. I do not support the second reading of the Bill because I do not think it will be for the benefit of the community for me to do so.

When speaking about some other legislation, the Chief Secretary said that the cost of houses had recently come down by as much as £200 or £300. I said to him, "How will you reconcile that with price fixing?" and he said, "We will come to that on the Prices Bill." Let us hope that

he comes to it when he replies to the debate, because he did not mention it when introducing the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: Houses do not come under price control.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know they do not; but the commodities with which they are built would come under price control if this Bill were passed.

The Chief Secretary: If necessary.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, if necessary; and I feel sure that the Government would find it necessary. I also asked, by way of persistent interjection when Mr. Barker was speaking—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I am quite willing.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —what method he would use to fix prices. I asked the Chief Secretary the same thing; but so far I have not received a reply. We have gone over this before, but let me repeat it: An article that is manufactured at a certain cost is presented to the price-fixing commissioner, with details showing the cost of manufacture, and he places a price upon it—in other words, upon the cost of manufacture. If the cost increases, the manufacturer simply goes back to the price-fixing commissioner and gets a further increase on the price of the article. That is the basis upon which prices are fixed, and it cannot correctly be called price control. A maximum price for the article is fixed because the price-fixing commissioner has nothing else to go upon. So how can a system of that nature be successful? It has been proved, in countries all over the world, that price fixing never gets a community anywhere. I do not think it would be in the best interests of the people of this community and therefore I oppose the Bill.

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

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [9.25]: In introducing this small Bill, the Chief Secretary explained its provisions, but I would remind members that it is a small Bill with a big significance. He explained that it contained only one principle, which was, in effect, to extend the right to vote to the spouse of a householder or freeholder. He also rightfully said that its introduction in this Chamber was consistent with the request that has been voiced here that this House should be entitled to introduce any reforms that might be required in its own Constitution.

I notice that since the Bill was introduced the Chief Secretary has found it necessary to have an amendment placed

on the notice paper, which obviously related to a measure recently passed, and which made the section shown in the original Bill inconsistent with the context. The section which was crossed out was really a definition of the term "householder" and it explained that "householder of a dwelling-house" means a person liable for the payment of rent of a dwelling-house and whose usual place of abode is the dwelling-house. I do not know whether the Leader of the House wants to proceed with that in a different form, or whether the proposed amendment is to effect the changes to which I have referred.

But while commending the Chief Secretary for the reasons he gave when introducing the Bill in its present form, it is unfortunate that it does cut across the primary principle upon which the franchise of the Legislative Council was founded—that is, the property qualification upon which the entitlement to enrolment is based. Admittedly this is only a slight deviation from the principle, but it does cut across it, and it could pave the way for fresh demands and possibly fresh concessions; and, finally, the franchise might become similar, to all intents and purposes, to that of an associate Chamber.

That would do away with the intention of the founders of our Constitution who provided, as far as possible, that this House should have a franchise different from a sister Chamber, with different dates of election, with the idea of getting different opinions on legislation introduced, and avoiding what has taken place in other States and in the Federal sphere—asking the same body of electors, at the same time, to give an expression of opinion on exactly the same issues. The obvious result is the same in both cases.

The Chief Secretary: You get that now.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We do where that occurs.

The Chief Secretary: No; I mean here.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: No; we do not. I think we have adhered fairly closely to what the framers of the Constitution had in mind in making this a House of Review.

The Chief Secretary: Say that again!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is a principle which we do not care to surrender. I think it would a sorry day for Western Australia if this House became a rubber stamp, as is unfortunately the case in some Constitutions as they have developed in the Federal sphere and in the Eastern States.

The Chief Secretary: You are not serious in saying that?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am. I am of the opinion that our Constitution is far better than that of all the other States

or the Commonwealth. Far from our reviewing our own Constitution, I think others might, with advantage, copy it.

The Chief Secretary: I am querying the question of review or rubber stamp.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think that is substantially true.

The Chief Secretary: I have not seen it.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think the Leader of the House has been a member of this Chamber for long enough to realise that from time to time this Chamber has been used as a House of Review. It has been no respecter of government; because legislation coming here, from whatever government has been in power, has been amended to suit the views of members of this House, based on its interpretation of the public reaction to certain Bills.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The popular reaction of this House would be better out of existence.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: When the Constitution was first framed in 1899, the property qualification was £100 equitable estate or a householder qualification of the payment of a rental equal to £25 per annum. In 1911 the qualification was brought down from £100 to £50 for equitable estate and from £25 a year rental to £17 sterling for the householder's qualification. If we take into account the diminishing value of money since that time, it must be admitted that the qualification has become very small indeed and is well within the grasp of anyone who desires to have a vote for the Upper House, whether that person be a husband or wife or the husband and wife, or, in effect, anyone who cares to qualify under these two headings.

But I think one of the principal objections to the proposed amendment now before us is that it is only a comparatively short period between now and election time. If the Bill as presented to us were carried, it would mean a tremendous number of enrolments throughout the State, which would impose a tremendous task on the various organisations and the State Electoral Office, and I do not think the work could be completed in time for the elections.

The main objection we have to the Bill is the breaking down of the primary qualification of being either the owner of property valued at £50 or having a rental interest in a house equal to £17 per annum.

The Chief Secretary: Has not a wife got an interest in the house just the same as a husband?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I would say that the qualifications are so liberal that they are well within the compass of anyone who desires to obtain a vote. For that reason I oppose the Bill.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.33 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 1st November, 1955.

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| Railways, (a) delivery of diesels and other rollingstock | 1483 |
| (b) relaying of permanent way, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury lines | 1483 |
| (c) additional railcar service and new sidings | 1483 |
| Housing, (a) financial assistance to home builders | 1483 |
| (b) supply and placement of pre-cut homes | 1484 |
| Annual Estimates, Com. of Supply, general debate | 1485 |
| Speakers on financial policy— | |
| Mr. Brady | 1485 |
| Mr. Johnson | 1492 |
| Mr. Sewell | 1499 |
| Mr. Hill | 1501 |
| Mr. O'Brien | 1510 |
| Bills : Child Welfare Act Amendment, 3r. | 1484 |
| Traffic Act Amendment, 2r. | 1484 |
| Zoological Gardens Act Amendment, returned | 1485 |
| Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property, returned | 1485 |

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

ELECTORAL.

Swearing-in of Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the electoral district of Bunbury caused by the death of Mr. Frank Guthrie, showing that George Frederick Roberts has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear-in the hon. member.

Mr. Roberts took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTIONS.

LOAN FUNDS AND REVENUE.

Expenditure at Bunbury and Albany.

Mr. HILL asked the Treasurer:

(1) Of the £3,000,000 which he states is to be spent at Bunbury during the current financial year, what amount is from—

(a) Loan funds;

(b) revenue?

(2) Will he give the corresponding figures for Albany?