

Legislative Council

Thursday, 24th November, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Soil Conservation Act Amendment.
- 2, University Medical School, Teaching Hospitals.

QUESTIONS.

FORESTS.

Expenditure on Busselton-Jarrahwood Project.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Will the Minister inform the House what money has been spent on the forestry project adjacent to the road between Busselton and Jarrahwood?

(2) Has this project been abandoned?

(3) If so, why?

(4) If not, when is it anticipated that the planting of this area will be completed?

(5) Is it intended to plant pine forests on the properties recently purchased from farmers in the Nannup district?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) £98,188.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) Further plantings must await observation of the results of earlier plantings and some experimental work now in progress.

(5) Yes.

FREMANTLE HOSPITAL.

Exchange of Land.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

Adverting to my questions and the Minister's answers of the 2nd November, 1955, relative to the proposed new Fremantle hospital and land at Hilton Park, is the Minister in a position to indicate how far this matter has progressed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The delineation of the site has been delayed pending location of a proposed controlled access road, but it is hoped that finality will be reached at an early date.

BILL—ALBANY HARBOUR BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill to amend the Albany Harbour Board Act in respect of fees payable to members of the board. The provisions of the Act limit the fees payable to £100 per annum for the chairman, and £50 for members. Members of the board have requested an increase in their fees, which now amount to £46 per annum, approximately.

Under the Act, it is not possible to give them a reasonable increase; and therefore it is proposed, under this Bill, to delete that section of the Act which places a limitation on the fees payable to the chairman and board members, and to make provisions for the fees to be prescribed by regulation and approved by the Governor-in-Council.

At present, the chairman receives £2 10s. per meeting, and the board meets twice a month. Therefore, the chairman receives £60 annually; whereas, under the Act, he could receive up to £100 for the work involved in the administration of the board

at Albany. This work has increased since the wharves have been built, and more shipping is using the port. The remuneration at present is small.

For each sitting, board members receive £1 17s. 6d., which, too, is meagre payment for the time they spend on board matters and on details in connection with trade and commerce at the port. On behalf of its members the board has requested an increase to bring their emoluments somewhere near what they deserve in connection with the work they are doing. There is little else that can be said about the Bill. The only amendment is to make provision for the members of the board to receive a higher fee for the work they carry out.

Hon. H. Hearn: Have you any idea of the increase you have in mind?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No increases have been considered.

Hon. H. Hearn: You must have given it some thought.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The request came quite recently from the board, and naturally it was passed on to the Treasury. Treasury officials discovered that under the provisions of the Act it was impossible to do very much for the members of the board, and that a matter of £4 a year was all that could be extended to its members.

Hon. J. Murray: Is this the only board affected?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: This is the only one affected under the Act. Most others have power of adjustment through the Executive Council. I think the Harbour Trust is one of them. We amended the Lotteries Commission Act to provide for the same thing. The fees of most committees these days are regulated through Executive Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.42]: I had the honour, as Minister, to be in charge of the Albany Harbour Board in conjunction with the Fremantle Harbour Trust and other port authorities. The request submitted in the Bill, which is a very small one, is quite reasonable. I think the chairman of the Albany Harbour Board is still Mr. Bolt; at least, he was chairman.

The Minister for the North-West: He still is.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I know that one of the members, and a very good one, is a Mr. Keith House. It is necessary for him to drive all the way from Gnowangerup to attend the meetings of the board, and he used to attend them regularly.

Hon. H. Hearn: Did they not get travelling expenses?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am not sure about that, but I do not think they did. I believe the job was considered largely an honorary one. I do know that when the board was first formed—and that is only a matter of a few years ago—its members were particularly good men. They were public-minded citizens who, I think, regarded any payment for the office as one of the last considerations which actuated them in taking on the particular job.

I agree with the provision for making a small increase; and it can only be a small increase because the emoluments to these various officers must have some relation to what is being paid to those holding similar office at other ports. As an Act of Parliament has to be passed to deal with a very small matter like this, I think the provision which enables it to be decided by Executive Council on future occasions is a wise one.

Such a small matter like this, which is really administrative, should not need to come before Parliament for examination. I have not examined the Act, but I do not think it is necessary that this should be done. As I see the Bill, having heard the explanation submitted by the Minister, and knowing the background of circumstances in connection with it, I am quite happy to suggest that members should agree to the measure which is only a machinery one. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned to a later stage of the sitting.

(Continued on page 2090.)

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been rendered necessary by action that has been taken in the last few days in another place. Members will recall that last year the Public Service Act was amended to the effect that the position of Public Service Commissioner would expire on the 31st December, 1955. In conformity with that amendment, fresh legislation was introduced with the idea of setting up a Public Service Board. That Bill, however, met a fate that is very common in this Chamber.

Hon. H. Hearn: It was not in this Chamber but in another place.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope members will not be disappointed in this measure. They may have had ideas of a long

debate on the other Bill, and I hope they will not transmit their flood of oratory on to this measure. Because of the fate that befell the other Bill, it was necessary to introduce this rush measure in order to fill the gap. One might call it a continuance Bill; it continues the office of Public Service Commissioner until the 31st December, 1956. The idea is that fresh legislation can be introduced next session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.47]: This Bill is obviously necessary.

Hon. A. R. Jones: We can see that.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: There must be a public service commissioner; and having regard to the necessity, as explained by the Chief Secretary, I am sure members will support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—TRUSTEES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.51]: With others, I wish to express regret that the report of the Royal Commissioner could not be made available early enough for us to have a look at it and study more fully the suggestions of the commissioner. It is obvious from the rather hurried look I have had at the Bill that several changes are necessary. One, in particular, concerns the make-up of the board. Throughout the report, many reasons are given for such a change, and two or three alternatives are provided. Members need a considerable amount of time to study the report before they can make any sound decision. I am particularly keen that the board shall carry on; and, for that reason, I will support the measure.

One aspect of the Bill I do not like is that which provides that the board shall have power to fix the price of eggs. My objection is that the board is to say that the price to be charged by the reseller shall be so much above that charged by

the board. I prefer that the figure should be fixed at a percentage rather than as a number of pence. That is to say, if eggs were sold by the board to the retailer at 3s. per dozen, then 15 per cent. above that figure—or such other percentage as might be decided upon—should be fixed as the maximum charge to be made by the retailer. That would leave it to the retailer to use his own judgment, and he could charge only 10 per cent. if he so desired.

I have a firm belief that if the maximum price were fixed at 3s. 9d., for instance, that would be the charge made. If we had a percentage adjustment, it would be easier to follow, and there would never be any doubt in the minds of people as to what the cost ought to be, because they would know that it must be no more than a certain percentage above the figure charged by the board.

Before members agree to allow the board to have a life of five years, I hope they will give very careful consideration to the matter. I realise that those engaged in the industry would like to have some idea of what their destiny might be, but I suggest that a life of 12 months for the board would be sufficient and then it would be incumbent on whatever Government is in office next year to bring down legislation to incorporate suggestions made in the Royal Commissioner's report, or such of them as they considered would be beneficial to the industry.

I have always been puzzled to know why the egg producers have not made some approach to the right authority for the establishment of a co-operative enterprise, because I believe that that would be the ideal way to handle produce from the farm to the consumer. Not only would the producers become shareholders, but it would be open to the consumers to do so if they wished. What better system could there be to enable those engaged in the industry on their own behalf to have full control of their affairs? It would be a sound move indeed if they decided to take that action to manage their own business without interference from anybody else.

The opinion of the Royal Commissioner that the chairman of the board has too many irons in the fire to enable him to do this job efficiently, is shared by me. I do not know the person, and I can be guided only by what is in the report. We know that he has at least six jobs, and a man who is in that position must have his time very much divided.

The Minister for the North-West: They are honorary, you know.

Hon. A. R. JONES: He could not possibly be expected to give a great deal of time to this work, because of the emolument he receives; and I suggest that, whoever is chairman in the future, he should

be more closely associated with the industry and receive a greater remuneration. I do not know who would be appointed, or who could be appointed; but it is essential, as pointed out in the report, that the person chosen for the position should have a thorough inside knowledge of the industry and be able to give more time to the work than it is possible for the present chairman to devote.

It is my intention to support the Bill but I shall submit an amendment providing that the board shall continue in existence until the 31st December, 1956. I think that will give sufficient time for all the pros and cons to be gone into, and for an amending Bill to be submitted next year. The producers would thus know that amending legislation was dependent only upon members being able to make a closer study of the report.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [4.58]: I, too, will support the Bill, but I commend the remarks made by Mr. Jones. It seems strange to me that the Government should have gone to the trouble of appointing a senior magistrate as a Royal Commissioner on this subject—a man who has spent many weeks investigating the affairs of the egg board; that at the last minute we should have the report brought to the House, with no time available to us to acquire even a nodding acquaintance with the commissioner's findings; and that, in spite of that, we should be asked to extend the life of the board for five years. It seems to me to have been a waste of money having a Royal Commission if we are now summarily to dismiss his findings in this manner.

Surely, in the present uncertain political outlook, it would have been very fitting for the Government to submit legislation extending the life of the board for a year only, so that in the coming session a more comprehensive Bill could have been brought down. In the meantime, members of this House and another place would have time to study what I believe must be a very valuable document and an extremely valuable contribution to the working of the industry in this State. Therefore I think Mr. Jones has made an excellent suggestion, and if he moves an amendment along those lines he will have my support.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [5.11]: I wish to make a few suggestions on the Bill, which I support, but before doing so, I pay a tribute to the excellent report brought down by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Smith. The report is plainly set out. Obviously a fairly wide investigation has been made, and we should pay a tribute to him for keeping his report at such a high level.

A suggestion which I have to make and which I think should receive the consideration of the Government, is that a woman be appointed to the board. I think that has everything to recommend it. Of all the things that a woman understands, she understands most those that have to do with food and marketing. I have always regretted that the time seems not to have arrived when men will give to women the chance to show the contribution they can make to boards of this nature.

I do not know of any board that would recommend itself more to this suggestion than the Egg Marketing Board, because it deals with such a staple item of diet. The freshness of eggs is most important; and a woman would be able to assess the housewife's point of view and reactions to the position. The marketing of eggs depends largely on the demand made by housewives for this article of diet. If, as a board member, we had a woman who understood housekeeping—and most women do—she would have nothing but a good effect on the board.

A woman knows, when she is on a certain wage or income, how much she can allow for each article such as meat and vegetables. She has that work to do; it is her job to do it. It would be a great help to the men on the board if there were a woman member as well, because they would know how she assessed the demand for eggs. One could say that each housewife could well use many more eggs than it is possible for her to purchase if she is in the low income or the ordinary income group, because eggs are so expensive. I would say that very few families use the quantity of eggs that could and would be used if they were more economically priced.

I am going to comment on the portion of the report dealing with the fixing of the price of eggs, in the hope that my remarks will be taken as a helpful suggestion. To me, the method of arriving at the wholesale price does not measure up. It is said to be governed by the anticipated price that the board will get overseas. I see that the price we get overseas is 2s. 6d. per dozen in Britain, and the producers are paid 3s. 6d. per dozen, and the wholesale price on the local market is 4s. 6d. Why cannot eggs be put on the local market at a lower figure, even if we export less?

Hon. L. Craig: I think you had better stick to housekeeping.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I might have to, but I am going to throw these suggestions out and someone might get a bright idea from them.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you think you could work it on the same basis as a European worker?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: This is not a European worker. It is my opinion that men get a fixed idea and they will not

move quickly from it if they are shown a point. Mr. Wilson said that the price was fixed because of—

- (a) The law of supply and demand as applied to eggs on the home and overseas markets;
- (b) the financial position of the pool equalisation account at the time of the decision;
- (c) an assessment of the amount of pool equalisation charges that could reasonably be met by the home market.

The cost of production has been forced out of the calculations by virtue of the more pressing importance of supply and demand.

In my opinion it is more important to get eggs as fresh as possible, or to be sure they are quite fresh when they go to the local market, and that they are sold at the most reasonable price possible. I often wonder why we have to put up with second-grade eggs, as we do. This applies also to fruit and other things. The best we produce can be exported; while we, the people in the country which produces these things, get the worst deal. That is something I want explained, because it does not make sense to me, as a housewife. The board needs to raise the demand for eggs in Western Australia. I think there is no one more fitted to do that job than a woman, because she would be talking women's language and would find out from the people concerned why they did not buy more eggs.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: The commissioner did not think so. He formed the opinion, after listening to the housewives' evidence—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That was one housewife. I am talking about a woman being on the board and finding out about the things I am mentioning. When a woman is feeding a family, she assesses eggs at the ratio of about one dozen to 1 lb. or 1½ lb. of meat. That is how the ordinary housewife works it out. I suppose it does not occur to the man in the street that it is worked out in that way. Whatever the price of eggs, we cannot take more than that amount from the housewife's budget. I am not trying to be contentious, but am simply putting forward the women's reaction to this matter.

The main thing I want to ensure is that the eggs shall be fresh. No matter what we do, we do not seem to get food that is fresh. That is regrettable because it is from fresh food that bodies grow to health. It is the women's job to feed the nation and to see that families get food as fresh as they can because there must be quite a value, which we cannot assess

to a decimal point, and which we lose when we have to use food that is not so fresh.

In the early part of this year I got a dozen eggs, and 10 of them were absolutely stale. The housewife has a simple way of testing an egg. She puts it into water; and, if it is really fresh, it lies over on its side. As it gets older, it starts to float, and when it is ten days old, it stands on end. I could not get one egg out of the dozen—for which I paid 6s.—to go down a little bit and lie on its side. I hope I have added something to the debate.

I am earnestly asking that consideration be given to the idea of appointing a woman to the board, because I think she would have a special contribution to make to it. I am always advocating that women be appointed to food boards. So far, this proposition has not been tried, so we do not know whether it will be a good one or a bad one. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and if a woman were appointed to this board, we would soon find out whether she was good, bad or indifferent. I ask that a woman be appointed to the board, and I suggest that the Government might think of that when the next appointment is made.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.11]: It is unfortunate that the report of the Royal Commissioner has been received too late for the Government to introduce amendments covering the recommendations he made as a result of his lengthy inquiry. All the Bill seeks to do is to extend the life of the board for a period of five years, and give it the right to control the retail price of eggs. It would have been impossible, from the time the report was received, for the Government to frame regulations and bring a Bill before the two Houses of Parliament, at this stage of the session.

Some disagreement has arisen over the life of the board. Surely, if the board is to operate, it needs some tenure of life. In view of the ramifications of egg marketing, and the duties and requirements of the board, what will transpire if we give it only 12 months in which to operate without a guarantee of any future? Here we have an industry that has grown up in Western Australia over the last seven or eight years, and is doing a particularly good job for the State.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Are you suggesting that it be continued for five years?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I certainly am.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: From this juncture.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. If we extend the life of the board for five years, that does not mean that its make-up cannot be altered in that period. I do not know

that there is any need to alter its set-up. At present, the board is a happy one. There may have been rumblings in the past. We often get a dissatisfied board when certain persons, through lack of ability or personality, are beaten for a position on it. They do not like it, and they make a row, and so we get the feeling spread around that all is not well. I understand from the producers' representative that the board is quite happy today.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is the first time it has been for a long time.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is perfectly happy today, so I understand from information given to me, and that is all I can work on. Reference has been made to the chairman. If the chairman were given the job of running the board as manager, that would be different from what we have been told. But there is a general manager of the Egg Board, and it is his duty to carry out the work of the board. The chairman only presides over its meetings and dictates to the manager its policy. It is then the manager's job to carry out that policy. That occurs in all businesses.

To appoint a full-time chairman would be to add to the cost of the board's administration, with a consequent reduction in the return to the grower. It might be only a small increase in the total cost; but once we started to build up the cost—and unfortunately that is too frequently the case these days—of the administration of the board, we would reduce the return to the producer; or, alternatively, the product must be sold at a higher price.

The board's function is not only to regulate the selling of eggs on the local market, but also to control the pulping, grading, processing and candling of the eggs. The whole of this work entails many commitments in the future. What would be the use of a board making arrangements for eggs to be marketed overseas if it thought that within 12 months it was likely to be wiped out? What kind of overseas markets would we be able to develop if that were the case?

The Minister for the North-West: None.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It would be farcical. So I ask members to give serious consideration to not restricting the life of the board to 12 months but to allowing it a tenure of office of five years; and I think they will agree with me that, if that is done, it will be to the advantage of the industry. One can imagine the board of directors of Hearn Industries having a term of office of only 12 months and what would happen to its expansion in the future.

This industry has exported eggs to the value of well over £4,500,000 in the last seven years. That is a considerable amount of money for a small industry to

produce. It is £4,500,000 of fresh money that enters the State to help its economy. Although the producers of that commodity have had to sell it at a loss, the local consumer has had to pay a little extra per dozen in order to stabilise the price.

Many will say, "Why produce a product to sell it at a loss?" If we are going to take that attitude and say that everything we produce shall be consumed only on the home market, and that nothing shall be exported, what kind of industry will we have? We have to sell overseas so that our industries can expand and this country will have something to live on.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: We need not sell perishable goods.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If we are not going to sell perishable commodities, what are we going to sell? We sell butter, dried fruits and many other perishable products overseas. At present the export of products from our secondary industries to markets overseas is worth about 5 per cent. of our total income. So this country would starve if it had to rely on the exports from secondary industries.

The suggestion that a woman should be placed on the board may have some merit; but if the lady appointed did not use any more commonsense than Mrs. Hutchison did when she talked about the cost of eggs, and suggested that the price should be what the housewife can afford to pay, I am afraid we would not get very far. If we were to get down to the basis of selling eggs at a price which the housewife can afford to pay, without taking into consideration the producer's cost of production, I fear the industry would not survive very long.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I said that if the price were reduced, the housewife would consume more eggs.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The hon. member said that what the householder could pay should be the price of eggs.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I said that she would consume more.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: What is the use of a farmer producing eggs at a cost of 3s. 6d. per dozen if the housewife can pay only 2s. 9d. per dozen?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is not a logical statement.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is what it would mean if the hon. member's suggestion were adopted. None of us has had an opportunity to read the whole of this report. I have managed to peruse roughly half of it. No doubt the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Smith, and his secretary have spent a great deal of time and thought on the compilation of this report.

No matter what Government is in office, it will be its responsibility to implement the recommendations outlined in the report. If it does not, it is up to the members of the party in office to see that they are implemented. Furthermore, any private member has the right to introduce amendments to the Act on the lines of the recommendations contained in the Royal Commissioner's report.

Hon. L. Craig: The Bill seeks only to grant to the board power to fix the retail price of eggs?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, for a period of five years.

Hon. L. Craig: There is nothing else?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No, nothing else. If the endeavours that are being made to restrict the life of the board to 12 months are successful, it will result in chaos in the industry and will nullify to a great extent the efforts of the board not only to look after its home market but also to find further markets abroad. We never know when we will be able to obtain fresh markets overseas which can take our exportable surplus. As a matter of fact, over the last few years 30,000,000 dozen eggs have been sold overseas, representing 41 per cent. of the total production.

I agree with Mrs. Hutchison that if the eggs could be sold at 2s. 6d. a dozen to the housewife she would probably use more; but one cannot sell a commodity on the home market at less than the cost of production. If every home were to consume one more egg per week, which would reduce accordingly the number exported, possibly the price could be lowered; but again we would get down to the basis that we would be producing eggs only for home consumption, and we would have nothing to export. If we arrived at that basis we would have chaos. So we must continue to produce on a basis that enables us to export overseas.

Hon. L. Craig: Why should we eat another egg more per week? I would eat less bread if I did that.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I will read to the House only one small paragraph of this report, which is as follows:—

Disregarding form and constitution for the moment, and bearing in mind the problems arising out of over-production, I consider that an Egg Board with statutory powers is essential to the interests of the egg industry in Western Australia.

There we have a summing up by the Royal Commissioner, pointing out that this board is essential. If it is essential today, it will be just as essential in five years' time. If within that period the constitution of the board needs to be altered, we can alter it. Again I ask the House to agree to the extension of the life of the board for five years.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.26]: Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question is that the Bill—

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Mr. President, I protest against your attitude towards me!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Does the hon. member wish to make an explanation?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. You partly called my name previously, but you permitted Mr. Logan to speak before me.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Logan was on his feet before the hon. member.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: As long as he was on his feet before me I do not mind, but I do not like to be stood down for no apparent reason.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Mr. Logan sought to emphasise that to extend the life of the board for only 12 months would be detrimental to the industry. But what happened last year when it had only one year to run? Initially, the board's tenure of office was for five years. It was subsequently extended to 10 years from when the Act came into existence, and every year that passes is a year less of its life. Last year the board had only one year to run, but I know that it relies on the commonsense of members in both Houses to grant an extension of time if necessary.

A Royal Commissioner was appointed to inquire into its activities and to submit a report to Parliament. The board has done an excellent job. Very few members have had an opportunity to peruse the commissioner's report, because only one copy was laid on the Table of the House. How many of us have been able to study it? I know that Mrs. Hutchison has seen it, and perhaps one other member. Unless a member can place himself in the order of rotation to peruse the report, he has no opportunity to obtain it if he is to carry on his ordinary duties.

All the Bill proposes is to give the board power to fix the retail price of eggs; nothing else. I do not know what recommendations the Royal Commissioner made to improve the board. I am one who, for more than a year, tried to bring peace into the industry, and I had great difficulty. Continual appeals were made to the Minister to have a board comprised of only growers. Even those that complained most, and who were successful in being appointed to the board, soon left it again. The last man who complained most is now a board member, and perhaps he has brought to the board a good sense of responsibility.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The report was laid on the Table of another place last week.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I could not remove any papers from the Table there.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am not suggesting that you should, but I was wondering why another place received the report before we did.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thought the hon. member was suggesting that I could take the report from the Table in another place.

The Minister for the North-West: You could read it in another place.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is all very well! But perhaps I would not be given that opportunity. There are 50 members there as against 30 here. It is all very well for the Minister or the Government to try to make excuses for the report not being laid on the Table of this House on the same day as it was placed on the Table in another place. However, I am not complaining about that. Nevertheless, I want to be given a chance to peruse the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner and ascertain what are the possibilities of bringing the industry to a more satisfactory position.

The cost of eggs to the consumer last year was higher than it has ever been. They were over 6s. a dozen. As Mrs. Hutchison pointed out, eggs in shell are exported not only to the English market but also to the Persian Gulf, to the islands north of us, and to other parts of the world. A great deal of egg pulp is exported to the islands. Most of our surplus eggs are converted into pulp; but, sold in that form, eggs receive the lowest return. When I was in England, eggs were sold at 3s. 6d. sterling per dozen, equivalent to about 4s. 6d. Australian. They were of good texture and were well sought after by consumers.

The Egg Marketing Board has had a difficult task in trying to satisfy the producers. This is due to a few factors. Firstly, there are those producers who run their farms in a businesslike manner; they make good profits out of the industry. Secondly, there are those who are attempting to run farms with insufficient finance; and, of course, the farms are not up to the same standard as that of the efficient farms. Thirdly, there are those producers who market a few eggs all the year round—more so in the flush season—and they create the greatest problem and are the loudest in their complaints.

There is an egg-grading floor at Geraldton, and eggs produced around that centre are packed there. In other country towns, however, there are no grading floors, and the eggs have to be sent to the metropolitan area. Often they are stale by the time they arrive; and, of course, the highest price is not paid for such eggs. If the

Minister for the North-West were Minister for Agriculture, he would know of the number of complaints received from producers about the low return for their eggs.

The Minister for the North-West: Complaints by commercial producers?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They term themselves commercial producers. A farmer in Northam runs fowls as a sideline. He has a large farm, but runs poultry only as a sideline. He does this efficiently. When he sent his eggs to the board in Perth in hot weather they often deteriorated. If eggs could be chilled while they were being sent down, their condition would be greatly improved. I do not know how this problem can be overcome.

The Egg Marketing Board has assisted producers a great deal by paying the highest price possible, but unfortunately the higher the price received for eggs the greater the number of people who will engage in the egg industry, and the greater will be the difficulty in finding markets. During the debate, Mrs. Hutchison raised some good points. I do not know whether the ideas of a woman on egg production and consumption are better than those of a man. I do not think it should be the function of the Egg Marketing Board, which purchases eggs from producers, to fix a retail price. Most of the members of the board are egg producers. I believe that, except for the chairman, they are all producers. If they have power to increase the retail price of eggs, they will do so. By increasing the retail price they will receive a higher return.

I know the problems of egg production and marketing which face producers. I would like to see the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner given effect. I believe the egg industry has been examined very closely on the evidence that has been adduced. From the knowledge gained of the industry, the commissioner has made helpful recommendations. If the Act is extended for a period of 12 months, that will be sufficient for the time being.

The commissioner said that the chairman of the board is far too busy a person to devote the required time to egg-marketing affairs. That appeared in a Press statement. I know, for instance, that he is a journalist by profession. I also know that he is a member of the Town Planning Board, and that he has other interests. His journalistic work takes up a good deal of his time.

The Act should be extended for one year to give the Minister for Agriculture an opportunity of going thoroughly into the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner, and considering the effect that can be given to them, how the recommended reconstituted board is to be composed, and who will be the representatives. Once the Act is extended for five years, it will

not appear before this House unless complaints are made against its administration.

The Minister for the North-West: There is nothing to prevent a private member from introducing an amending Bill.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The practice is growing for private members to introduce important Bills. In the present session, there have been too few important Bills introduced by the Government and too many by private members. The Government should be responsible for framing the policy of the State. It has a majority.

Hon. H. Hearn: It has not got it now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is true. The policy of the State should be dictated by the Government in accordance with its election promises. The Government should dictate policy and say what Acts require amendment. Today, the practice is growing for private members to introduce Bills dealing with important matters. Government members seem to sit in silence, but vote solidly for such measures.

The Minister for the North-West: They may be good Bills.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Government members might say that it is good legislation. Nevertheless, they sit in silence, and one can almost cut through their silence. When it comes to a vote being taken, they vote solidly for this legislation. Can it be that they have more confidence in private members?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would ask the hon. member to address the Chair and not to draw interjections.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am attempting to speak to the House and not to draw interjections. What I am saying is true. More importance seems to attach to private members' Bills than to Government Bills.

I hope the House will agree to extend the Act for only one year, and charge the Government with the responsibility for bringing down a Bill in the next session of Parliament to give effect to all the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. Members can then give the matter the consideration to which it is entitled. In that event, there would be less hostility against the board from producers than there has been in the last five years.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.40]: In the Bill before us, there appear to be only two amendments. They refer to the power of the board to fix the retail price of eggs, and the extension of the Act for five years. If I remember rightly, when the Government instituted a Royal Commission to inquire into the egg marketing industry, it did so because of complaints

about the quality and price of eggs. Of the recommendations made in the very comprehensive report of the Royal Commissioner, those are the only two matters dealt with in the Bill.

On a cursory examination of the report, one finds there is very little more, if anything, that the Royal Commissioner could have covered in the egg industry. It is a very poor show that all that has been offered in the Bill are the small amendments I referred to—power to fix the retail price of eggs, and the extension of the Act. The Government could have done a much better job in presenting the Bill to Parliament.

The marketing of eggs under an equalisation scheme was brought about following the success of such a scheme in the dairying industry. The Egg Marketing Board was formed along the same lines, with the object of equalising the price received for eggs sold overseas, and the home consumption price, and so giving the producer a reasonable return for eggs marketed.

I do not think that Mrs. Hutchison knows the real set-up in regard to sale of eggs. They are sold on the same basis as dairy products. We have to accept the price offered overseas for our surplus eggs. In order to give the producer a fair return, the highest possible home consumption price is charged and this is equalised with the export price.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What is the average length of time an egg is kept before it reaches the housewife?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have not gone into the average time. It might be 30 days.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is of great concern to the housewife.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If there were a woman on the egg board, the time it takes for an egg to reach the breakfast plate could not be controlled by her.

I believe that the members of the board are, and over the past few years have been, doing a good job, taking into consideration the remuneration they have received. If members refer to the report of the board as tabled in this House, they will find that the fees paid to the chairman and the board members total a little over £1,300 a year, and there is an additional amount of £400 for travelling expenses. Thus, for the very small sum of £1,700 by way of remuneration and travelling expenses, these men are expected to carry out these duties.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There was a row about one man being sent to England.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am aware of that; there did seem to be something wrong. If we are going to have men who

can successfully control the marketing of eggs, we must appoint men of good business capabilities, and I do not think we at present have men of that calibre on the board. The chairman, Mr. Harvey, might be a good man in certain avenues, but I do not think he has had the experience to enable him to handle the financial affairs of the board as well as the administrative side.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He is a leader-writer on a newspaper and should be able to do everything!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That does not necessarily make him a good businessman. It is most necessary that for a board of this description we should have as chairman a man of good business capabilities. Admittedly it would be very hard to abolish the present board, but that might happen during the transition stage. The man in charge of this board should be a chairman-director giving his whole time to the work and being paid accordingly. Then he could keep his eye on the marketing side, the administrative expenses, and the major operations of the board. To assist him, he should have board members appointed as laid down in the existing Act—men appointed by the Minister, but men of business capacity. I believe that the consumers should have representation on the board. The eggs are the property of the producers, and they should have a say in the sale of their product.

The Minister for the North-West: That is, until the board takes them over.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Not at all; The eggs belong to the producers, and the board is there to handle the marketing of the product. I consider that the board has operated quite well, and I suggest that the same constitution should be continued in future with perhaps a slight change in the personnel.

Referring to the chairman, we are told that he has five other jobs on his hands; and considering the small remuneration paid him, he cannot be blamed for not devoting a great deal of time to the board's affairs. He does not receive more than £250 or £275 a year; and in view of prevailing money values, what man is likely to devote more than a few hours a week to such a job?

Then, too, he would have to be a very capable man in order to fulfil the duties of chairman and undertake five other jobs. He is a member of the Cottesloe Municipal Council, a member of the Public Library Board, a delegate to the Local Government Association, and a member of the Town Planning Board. Consequently he must be doing a lot of rushing around, and would have very little time to devote to his position as chairman of the Egg Board in order to make a thorough job of it.

There have been complaints about the way in which the board has operated, but I believe that the industry is at last beginning to find its feet. The principal Act was introduced just 10 years ago and that is not so long to work up a scheme of this nature with the whole set-up requisite for the marketing of eggs. In the initial stages of the Dairy Industry Board, there were complaints, just as there have been complaints about the Egg Marketing Board. The Dairy Industry Board found its feet in the long run and has since been working on a sound basis.

However, there is still room for improvement in the conduct of the affairs of the Egg Board as has been exemplified by the report of the Royal Commissioner. If quite a few of the provisions in his report are given legislative or administrative effect, I believe that the marketing side will go ahead by leaps and bounds.

Reverting to the position of the chairman of the board, his is a very big responsibility. A deduction of 10 per cent. is allowed for administrative expenses. In the aggregate, this amounts to a large sum of money; and unless there is somebody exercising close control over the administrative expenses, they can run away with quite a lot of money. The best course to adopt would be to appoint a chairman-director to control the board and pay him a reasonably good remuneration. I believe he would be in a position, as a full-time appointee, to keep administration expenses down to a point where the saving would represent much more than the remuneration paid to him. Members might say there is a manager. That is so; but he is more concerned with the sales side. When it comes to the administration of the board's finances, that is solely a matter for the board.

I can assure members that the administration expenses of this business cover quite a lot of angles. For some years the board has been striving to build up funds with the object of erecting premises for egg floors, offices, etc. These funds are being accumulated by means of a levy imposed on the producers. The reason for this step is that the rental of the present premises costs the board £4,000 a year, and that sum going out year after year would soon build up to a considerable amount.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The £4,000 would represent a lot of eggs.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. If the board is able to acquire its own premises, they will represent a capital investment belonging to the producers, and there should be a reduction in the annual costs of the board.

The latter part of the Bill proposes to extend the duration of the Act for five years, and I think we might reasonably agree to that. Then the board would be able to continue its efforts to build up the fund for new premises and would have

continuity in relation to other matters, while the producers would feel that they had the security of an Act of Parliament for at least that period. If the operation of the Act is restricted to a period of 12 months, members should appreciate that that would apply to the duration of the legislation and not merely to the continuance of the board.

When we consider the constitution of the board we find that the chairman was appointed by the Minister. Amongst the members are two representatives, including one having commercial experience, appointed by the Minister for a certain term. The producers feel that Mr. Harvey, with five other jobs, cannot carry out his duties as efficiently as could be desired. The various representatives should be retained as members until their terms expire, and for this reason legislation should be continued beyond 1956.

It would never do to chop off the heads of those representatives at one fell swoop, because there would be nobody left with a knowledge of the affairs of the board, and we do need continuity in this respect. When changes are considered, some sort of transition stage will probably be necessary in which to change the personnel of the board. I have no objection to offer to the method by which the board members are appointed. It has given satisfaction over the years; and, in spite of the report of the Royal Commissioner, I can see nothing wrong with the constitution of the board. I do believe, however, that a difference could be made in the personnel.

The Act should be continued for a further five years by the passing of the measure now before us. There is so much of importance in the commissioner's report that, no matter what Government is in power next year, I do not think it will be forgotten, or that legislation will not be brought before us in relation to egg-marketing. I support the measure.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [6.1]: There are only two points at issue in this measure; the retail price and the life of the board, the question there being whether it should be five years or some shorter term. All speakers to this debate so far have said the report is an excellent one and none has denied that the commissioner has done an excellent job. Seeing that the Royal Commissioner has given such an excellent report, why should we not accept one of its main recommendations?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why not accept them all?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I do not say that because we accept one we should reject the others; but I take it that the Government feels that the time is too short to do more than deal with the main recommendations, one of which is that the life of the board should be five years.

At one time it was considered that any person could set up as a poultry farmer, with a few pounds capital, and become successful overnight; but that theory was exploded long ago. There is no branch of primary production in which more knowledge is wanted or in which greater losses can be made than in poultry farming; and so, in order to give the necessary stability, I feel we should agree to this five-year term.

Many of us know of the chaos that existed in this industry before the advent of orderly marketing. I had experience of it because I handled eggs retail at one time, and I know that the quality was not 100 per cent. In fact, it was less than 50 per cent. at times. The way in which the eggs were handled and marketed was such that one could not rely on more than 50 per cent. of them being fresh; and the result was that I, like many others, used to obtain eggs from South Australia rather than buy the local article, because they were of better quality and were better graded and handled.

We have now reached the stage, however, where one can rely on the grading and quality of Western Australian eggs, and that has been due to orderly marketing. For that reason we should not overnight reduce the life of the board to one year. Such action as that might upset the calculations of many poultry farmers who have made their plans for years ahead; and so I believe we should stick to the five year term.

I agree that the retail margin is too high. It is contended that some percentage is necessary for the retailer and it seems to be at present 16 per cent., or roughly one-sixth. On that basis, if eggs sold at 1s. per dozen, the retailer would receive 2d. per dozen; and if eggs were 4s. 6d., the retailer would get 9d., which I think is higher than necessary. There is not a great deal of skill required in the retailing of eggs, and the work does not entail much bother, and so I think that when the price of eggs is high, the retail margin percentage should be lower.

While we all desire the price of eggs to be as low as possible, I do not feel that the present price is outrageous. Even though the price is now 4s. 6d. a dozen, we must remember that many commodities such as bread, meat and milk now cost at least three times more than they did fifteen years ago. At that time 1s. 6d. a dozen was considered a reasonable price for eggs.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If eggs are only 4s. 6d. a dozen now, that is the cheapest they have been for a long time.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Eggs have been at that price on the Goldfields for a long time; and they are not South Australian eggs but the local product, and of fairly

good quality. I am in favour of the retail margin on eggs being fixed, as I think the present percentage is too high.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Would you let the board fix the percentage?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Yes, as I think the board should know what would be a fair thing. It has been stated that the person who has all the bother of rearing poultry and producing eggs receives less for them than the retailer, who may have them in his possession for an hour or less, and that is true.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They have been charging 7d. per dozen more than the fixed price. I asked the board to consider that but they said it was not too much.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I think we should agree to the five-year term and to the right of the board to fix the retail price of eggs.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [6.7]: There are many poultry farmers in my electorate. Over the years I have spent a good deal of time discussing their problems with them, and I realise that the production of eggs is indeed surrounded with many difficulties. To be a successful poultry farmer, the man concerned has to mass produce and keep up a big turnover. The main problems and complaints of egg producers—I have led deputations to various Ministers on the point—have been in regard to the difficulty of administration in connection with the egg board. I was alarmed to see that the Minister introduced this measure in another place on one day and that the next day the commissioner's report was laid on the Table of the House; while we, in this Chamber, did not receive copies of the report until seven days later.

The Minister for the North-West: That is because it was the only copy available.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Only one copy of the report! That may give me more reason for my alarm.

The Minister for the North-West: But you knew where you could read it, and it was not far to walk.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is true; but I found that, while I could read it, I had extreme difficulty in getting hold of it, and a few moments ago I was trying to find a reference in the commissioner's report. Members have been clamouring to see this important document, and I am sure the Minister for the North-West will agree that, since yesterday, it has been difficult and that, prior to that, it was equally difficult for 80 members to peruse the report.

The Minister for the North-West: But it was tabled on Tuesday.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is not worth while disagreeing on the point. The fact is that it has been difficult for members to see the report. It has been emphasised

that the commissioner recommended that the board should be continued for another five years. If my assumption is wrong I will apologise, but I think his motive was that he was dissatisfied with the present board and its administration, and said so. He did not want to see the board become permanent, and therefore he recommended that it be continued for a period of no longer than five years. Is that correct?

The Minister for the North-West: I could not say.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Even the Minister, after telling me how easy it was to get the report, cannot say.

The Minister for the North-West: I could say, but I am not here to answer your questions.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In the absence of any contradiction, it could easily be the case. There is no doubt that the report is a terrific work, involving weeks and weeks of industrious study of the problems involved. One of the principal points that the Government is prepared to take notice of is the method of fixing the price of eggs, and I can imagine it is sympathetic to that suggestion and would subscribe to what is suggested because it is, in effect, a form of price fixing.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It is not just for that reason.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I wish the hon. member would make his own speech and allow me to make mine, because when he interjects I cannot carry on in view of the fact that his voice is too heavy. A further matter exercising the minds of the producers—it obviously exercised the mind of the commissioner—was the constitution and administration of the board. Yet no attempt has been made to effect any alteration there. The Government simply says, "Continue this Act for a further five years, and let the very basis of the producer's complaints continue for that period also."

The Minister for the North-West: The hon. member knows there has not been sufficient time.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Perhaps so. But how much more time would the Minister want?

The Minister for the North-West: It would need a lot of time to consider a 90-page report.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Would six months be a reasonable time?

The Minister for the North-West: Less than that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That caps my argument. If less than six months is sufficient time to fix the new process of administration of the board, surely a 12 months' continuation of the life of the board should be sufficient.

The Minister for the North-West: Study the report.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In addition to members having had little opportunity to see the report, the producers have had no opportunity of doing so. We do not blame anyone for that, but the fact remains that they have not had a chance to see it—

The Minister for the North-West: You know why.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, I am simply stating a fact. The time factor made it impossible for the report to be ready until a few days ago, but the producers have not had an opportunity to study it.

The Minister for the North-West: That is why we do not want to make wide amendments.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I wish to emphasise the point that, in my opinion, if the legislation is continued for a further 12 months, and not five years, no matter what Government is in power next session legislation can be brought down and presented to this House, consideration given to it in due course, and the necessary alterations made to the Act, with no risk to anyone and no fear that the board will fall apart. There would be no risk to the public—

The Minister for the North-West: That is what you think.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is what I believe. While I do not agree with the method of price fixing, that is the main point; and for the time being I support the Bill, in the hope that the necessary amendments will be made in the Committee stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [7.30]: I did not intend to speak on the Bill, but as Sir Charles Latham has said that we on this side sit and stare and do not know what a Bill is about, I felt I must say something to let him know that at least I have a good knowledge of what this measure is attempting to do. This Bill proposes to continue the marketing of eggs for a further period of five years, and to give the board authority to fix the retail price. That, I think, is a reasonable proposition.

If the life of the board is continued for another five years, it does not necessarily mean that those men who are now on the board will continue to be members of it for the full term of five years. Also, to give the board authority to fix the retail price of eggs is a good idea. The price of eggs on the overseas market—a collapsed market, too—is 3s. a dozen and the retail price on the local market is 4s. 7d. the 7d. being the 15 per cent. allowed as the retailer's profit. Out of the remaining 4s.,

1s. goes to the board—8d. for the equalisation fund and 4d. for administration expenses, candling, sorting, packing and so forth—and I think ½d. goes into a building fund.

During his speech, Mr. Baxter complained about the high cost of administration; but on those figures I do not think he had much to complain about. If the board is given authority to fix the retail price of eggs it will be a good thing because that is a definite weakness. Retailers are permitted to make a profit of 15 per cent.; and as the price of eggs increases, so does the profit made by the retailer.

If the profit for a retailer were fixed at 6d. or 7d. a dozen, I think it would be sufficient; but when it is limited to a percentage rate, such as 15 per cent., as it is now, the retailer gets a greater profit as the price of eggs increases. That is not right and is the main weakness in the Act. The more eggs we can sell on the local market the better it is for the farmer because of the amount paid into the equalisation fund. We should have no hesitation in agreeing to this Bill and I intend to support it.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [7.33]: I support the Bill. The main discussion in regard to it has been as to whether the board should be given a renewal of life for one year or five years, and the main dissatisfaction seems to have been with the present constitution of the board—mainly centred on the chairman. The parent Act states, in Section 12, dealing with the constitution of the board—

The chairman of the board shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.

That being so, I think it is safe to give poultry producers the security of operation that they want; and, as a consequence, I think we should agree to this Bill. Whatever happens at the next election, it will be competent for the Government of that day to take necessary action in regard to the appointment of another chairman if thought fit.

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

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Therefore, in the interests of the producers that I represent, I do not hesitate to give this continuance Bill my support. Mrs. Hutchison raised the point as to why we should have a higher home consumption price than that received for eggs and egg pulp which are exported. I think Mr. Barker covered that ground when he mentioned the equalisation fund.

If, as Mrs. Hutchison said, the price of a commodity were determined by the capacity of an individual to pay, a most remarkable state of affairs would exist, because some people would be able to buy an article for £10 while others would have

to pay £100 for the same thing. In addition, I wonder what the ultimate cost would be when such a system had had its effect upon the industry concerned!

It just would not work. It would destroy itself, because the first essential in any industry is to be able to make ends meet. I agree that the cheaper a commodity can be sold, within certain limits, the greater the consumption. But there is a limit to consumption. Our overseas exports must compete in price with the exports from other countries; and when we reached a limit for our local consumption, the receipts from both local and overseas sales would not be sufficient to support the industry.

Some of our friends seem to overlook that point. They appear to think we have a population in this Commonwealth of ours that is sufficient to carry the whole of our society on our own markets. Those who have had the least bit of experience in marketing know full well that that cannot be, because we have not the population.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Do not you think it would be a good idea to have a campaign to sell more eggs on the local market?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I think, speaking along that line, that we have to endeavour to reduce costs. The cost of transport today is tremendous. Freight charges for export egg pulp are high and are eating up such a percentage of the gross income of the industry that it is making the position uneconomical. It is all very nice for people to say that we should encourage the eating of eggs! But we must realise that unless we are all prepared to make some sacrifice towards a reduction in costs, it is of no use talking of campaigns to get people to eat more of this and more of that.

It is all a matter of economics. Mrs. Hutchison says that she looks at the position from the woman's point of view in the kitchen. It would be all right if we could start from the production angle first. The kitchen is where most of our foodstuffs are prepared for consumption; and, while I realise that there is some merit in what Mrs. Hutchison said about lowering the cost of eggs and other foodstuffs so that people can eat more of them, we must realise that those who produce the foodstuffs are not, in many instances, enjoying the same economic circumstances and conditions as are enjoyed by those mentioned by the hon. member.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Would not you say that it is the duty of a nation to see that its people get good food?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: That is a most remarkable question to ask me! We are living in a highly civilised country which has, perhaps, the highest standard of living in the world—with America thrown in. Yet the hon. member says, "Is it

not the duty of the Government to see that the people are well fed?" All that a Government can do is to see that the people have the necessary medium of exchange which, if used wisely, will enable them to purchase the wherewithal to nurture themselves and their families in a proper manner.

No one in his right senses could say that we in Australia have not the necessary medium of exchange to enable us to do that. There may be a few odd exceptions such as civilian widows and certain pensioners—but that would be only a small number in the aggregate—who could not come within that category, but there would be very few of them. A lot of those who say that they cannot afford to pay such a high price for eggs on the breakfast table have no qualms whatever in spending money on luxury items.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are not being realistic.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I am very realistic.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are not.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Born of realism!

The Minister for the North-West: About that egg!

Hon. L. Craig: Some of the eggs float.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: There is too much of this attitude that people have not the wherewithal to buy. The people have the wherewithal to buy if they desire to; there is no question whatever about that. In days gone by, the home, the table and the clothing of the children were first essentials. To hear some people talk makes me doubtful of the class they wish to represent.

In his report, the Royal Commissioner proposes to set up a board on a different footing from that on which the present board is constituted. His intention may be right. I have no doubt that the commissioner has given the matter considerable thought; but I am one of those who has been closely associated with producer movements for many years. It was an uphill battle to have placed in our marketing Acts any recognition of producer control. A great deal of time, thought and effort was put into that phase.

Some people say that the recommendations of the commissioner should be largely incorporated in the measure, but I do feel there will be a substantial resistance to that recommendation from the producers' point of view, for the reason I have mentioned. We have had some remarkable performances by marketing organisations that have been 100 per cent. producer-controlled. They have perhaps been a little different from this one inasmuch as the Egg Board does come into contact with the retail trade.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It is very similar to potatoes.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: It is a remarkable thing. The control of the Potato Board appears to have measured up to the requirements of the Royal Commissioner. However, we are not dealing with the Potato Board at the moment; we are dealing with the Egg Marketing Board.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I was referring to the retailer.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The organisation that has done remarkably well in Western Australia is the co-operative wheat pool, which was operated by primary producers. They operated so successfully in selling wheat that they created a subsidiary organisation to check the out-turn of wheat they handled, and that organisation was known as Out-Turns Ltd. It has agencies throughout Europe and its services have been sought after by many exporters. That goes to show that we have within this State individuals who, as well as being good producers, are good managers. If, instead of the statutory authority proposed, some form of co-operative enterprise could be produced, it might be to the good. But I have not had an opportunity to discuss this angle with the poultry farmers, and therefore the suggestion relative to the co-operative set-up is a little premature as far as I am concerned. With those few remarks it is my intention to support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North—in reply) [7.50]: As members know, this Bill has only two propositions: One to extend the life of the Act—not of the board but of the marketing Act itself—for five years; and the other, to give the board power to control the retail price of eggs.

During the discussion, quite a few speakers have mentioned the fact that the report of the Royal Commissioner was not made available to them for a sufficient period to enable them to study it. In fact, the report of the Royal Commissioner has not been in the hands of the Government for a sufficient time to enable it to thoroughly peruse it, consider it and draw up a suitable amending Bill to cover all the points of the recommendations. The report was received by the Premier on the 22nd November, and a little over three weeks have elapsed since its receipt.

There is no need for me to remind the House of the precarious position in which the Government found itself during that period, when nobody could say with any certainty just how much time was available for Parliament to consider any type of measure. A Bill was necessary—very necessary—to continue the Act itself; and this of course also covers the board. The Act is due to expire on the 22nd March next. Accordingly the main proposals in the Royal Commissioner's recommendations were put into legislative form.

brought here and placed before Parliament; and here they are. Objection is taken to the recommendation made by the commissioner of a period of five years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does he not say it should be longer than five years?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No; he suggested five years instead of 15 years as proposed by some producers. No doubt the commissioner would have had in mind the period left at the disposal of the Government to fully consider his report which, incidentally, is a 90-page report. No doubt he had these things in mind when he recommended a five-year period.

He would also be well aware of the fact that several members of the board have recently been appointed for terms which do not expire for another three years. Some of them were appointed and others were elected for a three-year term. The producers are elected and the consumers are appointed. As members know, the chairman is appointed by the Governor for as long as the Governor considers it is necessary. His office can be terminated at any time.

But would it be wise on the receipt of a report, which is three weeks old, to disperse immediately with the chairman or with any of the board controlling a concern of this magnitude; an organisation which has been built up and has a turnover of over £2,000,000 a year, with wide-spread ramifications? It would definitely be most unwise. The proposal to extend the term of the existing Act for only 12 months could have very serious repercussions on the successful organisation that has been built up. When I say organisation, I refer, of course, to the organised marketing of eggs produced in Western Australia.

Hon. A. R. Jones: How did they get on this year?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That question was also raised by Sir Charles Latham.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Well, tell us how they got on!

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is not the slightest doubt that had a Royal Commission not been appointed to inquire into the marketing of eggs, a Bill would have been introduced in this House very early in the session.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Could it not be introduced next year?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is ridiculous! The Act expires on the 22nd March next and usually Parliament does not meet until August of each year.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They mean with an interregnum of one year.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The restriction of the period to one year could have very serious repercussions on the whole organisation and on those producers dependent on it. I was surprised at Mr. Jones introducing this point, because I would say that in his area the majority of the producers are solely dependent on this organisation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: From Mr. Jones's area?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I would say so.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I would say that the egg producers in his area, though not commercial producers, produce eggs in conjunction with other activities, such as farming. With them, egg production is more or less a sideline.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is better.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is a well-known fact that the quality of eggs coming from those producers is not nearly up to the standard of those from commercial producers. It is also a well-known fact that their eggs are more difficult to dispose of. Sir Charles Latham said they had an air bubble at the end of them, indicating that they could be stale. The reason is that they are not collected regularly and they have further to be carried. They do not get the same care and treatment as is given to the production, gathering and handling of eggs by commercial producers.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: A lot of them are fertile.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Were it not for this organised marketing and pulping of eggs to provide an outlet for the part-time or seasonal producer, I would say they would not find a market for their eggs at all. It is very doubtful whether they could sell any eggs. They might sell a few locally but certainly not in any quantity. It could be very serious indeed if this Act were to collapse. That is not likely; it is not proposed. But a very serious position could arise if there were a one-year period in respect of the export trade and also, to a large extent, the local trade for pulped eggs.

Hon. H. Hearn: In what way would the extension for a year affect the position?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am about to tell the hon. member. The pulping eggs are the poorest quality eggs. They are not the first-class eggs that can be sold readily here or exported in shell overseas. They are the eggs that come mainly from the farmer-producer, and this could be the effect: Contracts for pulp are entered into each

year on the 1st September. Regular contracts are taken out which expire on the 30th August. The contracts that are in existence now will expire on the 30th of next August. We have factories here in Western Australia which buy quite a large percentage of the pulp. The manufacturers necessarily have to look a long way ahead, because they deal in large quantities and wish to make contracts. If Parliament says that this Act will be continued for only one year, they will not take the risk of waiting till Parliament meets next August to see what is going to be done about continuance.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They did last year.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: They did last year because contracts were entered into before there was any suggestion that there might be recommendations to upset the existing system. Of course, they would do that normally. But, having this in mind, what businessman would not be likely to say, "I have to secure myself for next August onwards. I do not know what might develop out of this rumpus about the Egg Marketing Board"?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There would be no more danger than would be involved in repealing the Act.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is no more danger in extending the period for five years than in extending it for one. If the hon. member did not want to act as a private member and introduce legislation here, he knows that there is a virile Opposition, no matter who is at the other end, and they would look after these things.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A private member could not introduce such a Bill, because it would be a money Bill. It covers payment of salaries.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is just nonsense to talk like that! Reference has been made to the possibility of a change of Government. There may or may not be such a change; but in any event, one year would ensure that something must be done. It is illogical to even suppose that, whatever Government might be in office, nothing would be done. Something would have to be done because, if the Government did not do it, the Opposition would force it to do so. The hon. member knows that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: So you are going to have a strong Opposition?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is always a strong Opposition in Western Australia, and the hon. member knows that, too.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think you are doing a lot of guessing.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am not guessing. Under the Redistribution of Seats Act, I think the result could never be otherwise. Getting back to the pulping side of the question for a moment, I would point out that the local market consumes a very big proportion of the pulp—somewhere between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. The balance is exported overseas and provides a very valuable income for part-time farmers who produce poor-quality eggs or the lowest grade of eggs. It amounts to a very big sum.

In 1954-55, pulp to the value of £164,000 was exported to the United Kingdom. With regard to eggs in the shell, the Egg Marketing Board exported in the same year, 1,996,500 dozen eggs to the United Kingdom; and during the same period, it exported 1,220,000 dozen eggs to Singapore, valued at £294,000. The Singapore sales are contract sales also. The merchants in Singapore contract with the Egg Board to be supplied with these eggs; and they, in turn, have contracts with the British Army and other forces in their area.

Consequently, those merchants have to look ahead. They must have continuity of supplies; and, because of our geographical situation, they deal with the Western Australian Egg Marketing Board. They deal with the board also because it has built up a tremendous export trade over the last eight years, and has a good reputation for grading, packing and quality. That is something that has to be protected.

If overseas buyers are going to read, or be told, that the Marketing of Eggs Act in Western Australia is being renewed for only one year, they are certainly going to look about them. They will have to do so in order to keep up their contracts. And they would not have to look very far, because New South Wales provides something like 52 per cent. of the eggs produced in Australia. South Australia also has a big surplus of eggs, and probably the other States are in the same position. The Western Australian Egg Marketing Board has been able to hold this export trade and build it up by virtue of its ability to supply the eggs.

Are we going to put some fear into the purchasers of these eggs overseas? Are we going to have them wondering what is going on in this Parliament when, if the Act were renewed for 50 years, any member would have the opportunity at any time the House was in session to introduce an amending Bill to do whatever he wanted to do with the legislation? These people must have some security of tenure, and the board must be protected. By protecting the board, we protect the producers. Incidentally, at the peak period last year, there were over 3,000 suppliers of eggs to the board.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I will quote you something about the Barley Board when we are dealing with the Appropriation Bill.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We are talking about eggs at the moment.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I thought so! A different idea, but the same subject—marketing.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We are talking about eggs at the moment. It was said that the industry might do better if there were a co-operative concern. Personally I do not know much about that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They will not touch it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I would say producers are very well off as they are. The scheme is working very well; and it is a credit to the legislation; and to those controlling it, that the industry has been built up to what it is. Do not forget that a great number of commercial egg producers were encouraged to go into the industry during the war years to produce food! They were encouraged to go on the land and take up poultry farming. Are they not entitled to some assurance of security that they will be able to carry on in the industry they took up for patriotic reasons, as well as to engage in some industrial activity on their own behalf?

There are other angles in connection with this Bill that must be carefully considered by members before they decide to restrict any operations of the board, or before they decide to allow any inference to go abroad that all is not well with the egg marketing scheme, and thereby lose some of our customers—in fact, lose many of them.

In 1946-47, only 33,540 dozen eggs were exported; but in 1954-55, the figure was 1,800,090. Surely that indicates that under the legislation some good results have been attained, particularly when it is realised that the management of the scheme has been in competition with producers in other States. I have already mentioned that 52 per cent. of the eggs in Australia are produced in New South Wales, and that South Australia is anxious to get some export trade and encroach on the Western Australian market. But in the competitive field it has not been able to do so.

In the financing of the activities of the scheme, the board depends on a Government guarantee through the Rural & Industries Bank. But the Treasury requested the board to endeavour to make arrangements with private banks, thereby releasing funds for other purposes. The board has been negotiating with a banking institution to take over the financing of the marketing of eggs during the period when

there are big quantities coming in, until they are exported and sold. Naturally the other banking institution is wondering what is happening. I know that even today repeated telephone calls have been received at the office of the Minister for Agriculture, from inquirers, as to what is happening to the Marketing of Eggs Bill.

Hon. H. Hearn: I suppose he was able to give the answer.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: This Chamber will give the answer. Members will see that it can be very detrimental to the industry as a whole to let the idea get abroad that some alteration is likely to be made to the Marketing of Eggs Act, as it might upset contracts overseas and local contracts with cake manufacturers who buy most of the pulp and have to look a long way ahead.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I should say the board has nearly a year's supply of pulp at Robbs Jetty.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not know what is in store; but I asked today whether all the egg pulp was disposed of and I was told, "Yes, there is never a carryover". There is another angle if the period of 12 months is included in the Bill. The organisation has a staff of some 200 trained workers who are skilled in the tasks they carry out. With 12 months' life, and no guarantee that the board will be continued—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There was none a year ago.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There was; the same as in 1950. It was continued then for five years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It will be continued again next year.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There was then no dispute or Royal Commission inquiring into the ramifications of the industry. I have already explained that the banking institution is marking time because it wants to know what is happening.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is it going to call up the overdraft?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No; it does not want to take it over. That is the difference. The skilled workers are not content to hang in the air, as it were, and be uncertain whether they will be there for 12 months, five years or 15 years, or the rest of their life. It is a normal reaction for any worker, especially a wage worker, to look ahead for security by way of permanent employment. He does not want to take a chance on what is going to happen; and if the workers in this industry are offered another job, they will take it. I cannot see what is to be gained by restricting the board to one year when all the contracts for the pulp expire in August of next year and Parliament will not meet before then.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They could go on putting up their buildings and carrying on their contracts.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I cannot see what those members who want the one-year period have in mind.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: To give effect to the Royal Commissioner's report.

Hon. H. Hearn: We have not seen it yet.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Members can give effect to the commissioner's report if they extend the Act for 50 years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: This will ensure that it is done.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member need not have any fears it will not be done when this Government is returned.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It will be a long time if we have to wait until then.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: What is all the hurry from the Opposition in another place and from the now recognised partial Opposition in this Chamber? What is all the scurry to restrict and hamstring this legislation? We cannot force any Government—which ever Government is in office—either with a one-year or a fifty-year term to introduce legislation; but members can introduce it themselves.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If it does not impose a charge.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I think there is something much deeper behind this one-year move. Why does not some member get up and tell us honestly what is in it, instead of just saying, "It is to implement the commissioner's recommendations."? They will be implemented all right after they have been thoroughly considered. The commissioner himself is not very definite in all his recommendations.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I do not suppose he would be; but he has made a very good recommendation, so far as I have read.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Which one?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members can deal with these points later.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I thought the hon. member had not had an opportunity to read the report.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What do you think I did during the tea recess?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is a bit different. I suggest that the hon. member has not read it thoroughly, because he has not had the time; neither have I.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I read only the tail-end of it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The commissioner has not been perfectly clear and definite in all of his recommendations. In connection with the reconstitution of the board he has made two submissions. Could any Government, on receipt of the report three weeks ago, have given due consideration to the recommendations, which are two-fold in this respect?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We want to give you a year in which to do it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member can give 50 years, and it will make no difference, because whatever Government is here next year will have to submit to Parliament what it considers are the best recommendations to adopt from the Royal Commissioner's report.

Much has been said about the chairman. I do not agree with the Royal Commissioner when he says that the chairman has too much work to do, and I am not afraid to say so. This is what the commissioner says—

At this stage, it is necessary to speak frankly and I hope without offering offence. Mr. Harvey, in addition to being Chairman of the Egg Board is:

- (a) A councillor of the Cottesloe Council.

That meets once a fortnight—

- (b) Chairman of the Beach Works Committee.

That would meet each week, I suppose.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are not working out his time, surely!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Many members have been and some still are members of local authorities, and they know what I am speaking of. If they belong to a local authority, they also belong to some committee within the local authority, and the time taken up in these duties is very little. The commissioner continues—

- (c) The Cottesloe representative on the Local Government Association.

I do not know when it meets, but it is not very often throughout the year—

- (d) The Local Government Association representative on the Library Board.

How often does that meet?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Once a week or once a fortnight.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It would probably meet in the evening and the meeting would last about

an hour or two. This man is also a member of the Town Planning Board of Western Australia, which could take up some time. In addition, he is a journalist by profession. What time a person puts into journalism he decides himself, I think, because I see them running all round the country. The commissioner went on to say—

I am of the opinion that considerable time and energy are required from the Chairman of an organisation like the Egg Board, and if Mr. Harvey is to continue as chairman he must shed some of his other duties.

I cannot see that.

Hon. H. Hearn: It sounds a sensible recommendation to me.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The Egg Board has a manager and a secretary.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Do not you, as a good union supporter, believe in one man one job?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There are members here who have more than one job. Speaking of boards and committees, we know of several gentlemen who belong to various boards, committees, associations and goodness knows what, but they can always attend Parliament and put in their time here. They have time at their disposal and can look after their private businesses as well. In addition, they attend to other semi-Government organisations and private boards. So I cannot see that there is much substance in this suggestion.

When dealing with the constitution of the board, the commissioner covered what is known as the Lucas report which was the result of an inquiry into the marketing of agricultural products in England. The Lucas report recommended that boards controlling the marketing of any produce should be comprised of independent individuals—people not connected with the industry or the product, either on the production side or the sales side—and that they should act as representatives of the taxpayer. Even in this industry it is the taxpayers or the consumers of the eggs—the general public—who tip the balance and equalise the price. The commissioner agrees that that is a very good set-up, and he suggests that something similar should be implemented to control this organisation. He suggests that it could be possible to set up some such control within the Department of Agriculture.

Then he makes another submission. He says that a board of four should be constituted and, for preference—I take it he suggests for preference—that it consist of independent individuals such as the chairman of the present board, who is not connected with the industry. That seems to be the ideal in the view of the commissioner. But he goes on to say

that the Minister, no doubt, would look for a member outside the industry, and he did not seriously oppose that move. Nevertheless, he made those two submissions.

Therefore, when members say, "Why does not the Government introduce legislation to cover all aspects of the commissioner's report", they must be fair and realise that the Government has not had sufficient time to consider how a board or a controlling authority should be constituted.

In all fairness, I submit that much of the criticism that has been levelled against the Government to the effect that the introduction of this measure was belated; or that its provisions are inadequate; or that—as Mr. Baxter has said—the Government has covered only two recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner in the Bill and overlooked all the other recommendations, is entirely unfair.

I think it was Mr. Hearn who said that the other recommendations had been summarily disregarded by the Government and that the extension of the period of the Act—the hon. member said the board, but he meant the Act—and the power granted to the board to fix the retail price of eggs were the only two recommendations the Government was concerned with. That was very unfair criticism, because no Government would have had the time to give full and deliberate consideration to this 90-page report and introduce legislation into this House at a time when no one knew when Parliament might rise.

This House, I trust, will not agree to any restriction of the five-year period, because it does not make the slightest difference whether the term is for five or 50 years. Any member can introduce legislation to amend this Act in the future, provided it does not impose a burden on the Crown. A restriction of the period of the Act to 12 months could have serious disadvantages. It could cause those already contracting with the egg board in this State to become a little doubtful about the continuity of their supplies and to look elsewhere for eggs, which are available to them from other States in Australia. That would result in a considerable loss to the egg producers of this State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for the North-West in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Cause 5—Section 40 amended:

Hon. A. R. JONES: I move an amendment—

That the word "fifteen" in line 35, page 2, be struck out and the word "eleven" inserted in lieu.

There is little need for me to explain the reason for this amendment because its object was discussed during the second reading debate. I would like to refer, however, to a few points made by the Minister during his reply to the second reading debate which will strengthen the need for this amendment. The Minister placed great emphasis on the fact that the industry must be given every protection because of the contracts that have been made by buyers of pulped egg with the egg board, and I heartily agree with him that they need some protection. I have moved this amendment with the object of assisting the industry.

After perusing the report by the Royal Commissioner, one can readily realise that a change in the constitution of the board is necessary; but at this stage there is not much that can be done, except that which is being attempted by the provisions of this Bill. Nevertheless, I hope that the amendment restricting the life of the board to one year will be agreed to.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What period did the commissioner recommend?

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister referred to all those people who are depending on the buyers of egg pulp to renew their orders with the board. But I wonder what they did this year. If what the Minister says is correct, they knew full well that the term of office of the board would expire on the 31st December, 1955. However, negotiations with the buyers of egg pulp were still entered into. Therefore, the Minister's argument is just plain crazy. No matter who the buyers of this egg pulp are, I am sure they have gone ahead with their contracts. They must have known that a Royal Commission was sitting, but I am certain it did not make any difference to their making contracts.

If the Government was so sure, as the Minister told us a few minutes ago, that it was going to base its legislation upon the recommendations by the Royal Commissioner, I maintain that the Government erred by not introducing an amending Bill about last September and so instilling into the people engaged in the industry some confidence that the tenure of the board was to be continued. Therefore, the Minister's argument has no foundation.

Further, the Minister stated that there was no need to worry whether the Government remained in office or went out, because the Bill would be essential for the benefit of the industry, and therefore, the board would continue to operate. My objection to the proposal is that previously this sort of thing has been promised, but nothing has ever been brought to fruition.

The Minister for the North-West: What sort of thing?

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister has said that legislation of a more permanent or major nature will be introduced in the future, but we have no guarantee that such legislation will be brought down to embrace some of the more desirable recommendations contained in the Royal Commissioner's report.

For example, I cite the Bill dealing with local government. That legislation was introduced two or three years ago in another place, and it has gone round and round but still has not been introduced into this House. Therefore, we have no assurance that the Government will introduce another measure at some time in the future if this Bill is passed to extend the life of the board for another five years.

I ask the Committee to agree to my amendment so that growers will have the opportunity to peruse the Royal Commissioner's report, to hold organised meetings to consider it, and to make recommendations on what should be contained in the amending legislation to be introduced next year, or give an expression of opinion on the critical statements contained in the report. Yesterday I was speaking to one producer and he said, "Surely you are not going to saddle us with that board for another five years?" I am sure the Minister does not want that either, and I ask the Committee to agree to my amendment.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not want to cover the ground I have already covered, but there are some points that I must refer to. The hon. member keeps referring to the life of the board, but that has nothing to do with his amendment. His amendment is dealing with the life of the Act.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is not the life of the board bound up with the life of the Act?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is a poor excuse for the hon. member to put up. It has already been explained that the tenure of the board could be terminated when the Executive Council next meets; and that the board could be disbanded, because three of its members are appointees, and three are elected. Therefore, the board could be disbanded very quickly.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Are not its members elected for three years?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Three can be elected, and the rest are appointees, and there would be no board if only three were left. The principal Act was passed in 1945 and proclaimed in 1946, and it provided that the Act should remain in force for five years and no longer. The five years would have expired on the 22nd March, 1951. When the previous Government was in office in

1950 a Bill was introduced to alter the figure "5" in Section 40 to the figure "10." So the Act would expire on the 21st March, 1956. The amendment seeks to alter that period of 10 years to 11 years. It will mean that the Act will cease to operate on the 22nd of March 1957. The amendment has nothing to do with the board. What is the reason for moving to get rid of the Act? Mr. Jones said that he would not trust the Government. Let us see what happened to the Local Government Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Local Government Bill has nothing to do with the amendment before us.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I agree. Seeing that one member has been permitted to discuss that Bill I should also be allowed.

The CHAIRMAN: He has not discussed that in my presence.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: He implied that this Government could not be trusted because he did not see the Local Government Bill. The hon. member knows why the Bill is not here. I have shown what the amendment means. I want to impress on members again that the confidence of overseas buyers of our eggs will be shaken if the Act is to expire in one year. How can they have confidence in the board, when they have contracts worth £250,000 for the supply of eggs to troops in Singapore?

Hon. A. R. Jones: Did you lose any contracts this year?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member knows very well that no legislation could be brought down when there was a Royal Commission inquiring into egg marketing. Complaints were made that there was no time to consider the commissioner's report. Would members have passed any Bill that might have been introduced when the Royal Commission was sitting?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Royal Commission was appointed by the Government. It should have known that the measure would terminate in a year's time, yet the board entered into three-year contracts for the supply of eggs to Malaya. I do not know of any continuance Bill which has not been passed when contracts were still in existence.

An opportunity should be given to members to study the report of the Royal Commissioner and the recommendations made by him, before making up their minds on the Bill before us. This cannot be done in the present session. If the Act is extended for one year, whatever Government is in office during the next session of Parliament will bring down a Bill to give effect to the recommendations.

None of the systems for marketing primary products has been as troublesome as the egg marketing system. Egg producers have never been satisfied. When there is an Australian Wheat Board in existence, it has power to enter into contracts. The same applies to the Egg Marketing Board. Never before has any Government refused to pass a continuance measure to honour existing contracts.

Only two of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner are included in the Bill, and for that reason I am prepared to extend the Act for 12 months only. In that period the board will be able to fix the retail price of eggs. In the past the board has allowed retailers as much as 7d. a dozen as their margin of profit. I have already said that there are very few breakages and this margin seems to be very high. In the big retail stores in Perth I doubt whether there would be one dozen breakages in the whole month of trading.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the amendment before the Chair.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am going to connect them. I am saying why the Act should be extended for one year.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was mentioning the price of eggs.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: May I say that the Act provides—

The CHAIRMAN: I know what the amendment provides.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is to fix the price to the retailers. One year is sufficient time for a trial of this practice. If the Act were extended for five years, we might find that in the dying hours of Parliament at the expiration of five years, a continuance measure would again be introduced. If the Minister for Agriculture were present he would agree that the period of one year is reasonable. Eggs are a good item of diet; but at the present price, they are too dear for the average household. If the price could be reduced, more eggs would be consumed, especially in view of the high price of meat. The only way to do that is to put into effect all the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I oppose the amendment. We have a great responsibility towards egg producers. As the Government appointed the Royal Commission, it is logical to expect it to carry out the balance of the recommendations made by the commissioner during the next session of Parliament. The Minister in charge of the Bill has already told us about the grave consequences that would follow if the board were granted a further life of only 12 months. The Minister had the highest ideals in drawing attention to this fact.

The previous speaker said that if the Minister for Agriculture were present he would be agreeable to the 12 months' extension. During the tea adjournment I spoke to the Minister for Agriculture, and he was very apprehensive of the outcome if the Act were extended for only 12 months. Buyers would not enter into contracts if they could not be assured of a continuity of supplies.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why did they not refuse to do so last year?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Last year no one knew what would happen, but the odds were 10 to one that the board would be permitted to carry on.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is exactly the position now.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: There would be no guarantee that the board could carry on after the next 12 months. What would happen to our overseas contracts? Eggs may be bought readily throughout the world, and if there were any doubt of continuity of supplies, buyers would trade elsewhere.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There was a shortage here a little while ago.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Throughout the world there is a big surplus. We have a serious obligation to the producers. We have also a responsibility to the general community, and members have clearly been told of the serious consequences that may ensue if the amendment be passed.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister said that I had stated that the life of the board was fixed. I took it members would understand that if the Act ceased, the board would cease. Without the Act, the board could not carry on. Mr. Barker seems to think we are not sincere.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I do not think you appreciate the implications.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I have been a producer all my life. Is it likely that I am going to turn the producers down and do something to their detriment? That would be the last thing I would have in mind. We do not know which party will be in office next year, but a measure could be introduced sufficiently early so that contracts could be made by the 30th September. Taking the Minister's own words, legislation will be brought down to continue the Act and the board, and so there is no need to grant a period of more than 12 months on this occasion.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Sir Charles Latham put up a good argument for the Government. He said that the board had entered into three-year contracts.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It always has done so.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I understood that it entered into annual contracts, but I am not sufficiently versed in the details to know whether there is a longer contract. If there is, that is all the more reason why the Act should be continued for at least three years, but preferably for five years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The Act could be repealed if a majority voted against it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That would be tragic for the industry.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Of course it would!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: An export trade worth a million warrants serious consideration, and members should be careful not to discourage overseas buyers or cause them to fear that there is something wrong with our organisation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They will not know anything about it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The fear inspiring the amendment is that the Government may not introduce legislation next year to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. I assure members that the Government would not have the slightest hesitation in implementing them.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And you should not have the slightest doubt of such legislation being passed.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I hope members will not sabotage confidence by restricting the continuance of the Act and the organisation to a short period.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The idea behind the amendment is not to compel the Government to bring in a Bill next year embodying the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. The amendment could not have that effect, because next year the Government could bring in a continuance Bill. We believe that orderly marketing is the only system that has worked beneficially from the point of view of the producers, and it is unthinkable that a measure designed for that purpose would not be passed by this Chamber. The Government, after considering the recommendations of the Royal Commission, might conclude that they should not be put into effect, and then it would be necessary to bring down merely a continuance Bill.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	10
Noes	....	....	....	14
				—
Majority against	....			4
				—

Ayes.

Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. E. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. J. Murray	Hon. A. F. Griffith

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. J. Garrigan

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. R. F. Hutchison

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—in reply) (9.15): I was surprised at the Chief Secretary's opposition to this Bill, particularly as it appears from his speech that it was based on a report received from the Licensing Court. I say this because the object of the measure was a matter of discussion between me and the chairman of the Licensing Court, Mr. Wauhop, when he told me that the court was not able to carry out what he considered to be the requirements of making hotel accommodation satisfactory as it did not have the discretionary power under the Act. This Bill is purely a discretionary measure, and would give the court full discretion in the matter of hotel accommodation in hotels outside the cities of Perth and Fremantle. If the Bill made it mandatory for the court to do anything, there might become justification for opposition to it.

The first provision to which objection was taken was that seeking to delete from the principal Act the requirement for a minimum of two bedrooms. In place of that minimum, the Bill would leave a complete discretion with the court so that it could at any time insist on anything from nil to 100 bedrooms. So I do not see that either the court or the Chief Secretary has any reason for objection there. If the Bill

had provided a maximum number of bedrooms, exception could have been taken to that, but it contains no such provision and would not restrict the amount of accommodation. I repeat that under that clause the court would have complete discretion to do what it thought best to provide accommodation in any hotel outside of the cities of Perth and Fremantle.

The only provision of the Bill to which no opposition was raised was that which states that the stabling of horses at hotels is out-moded. The Chief Secretary said that were the provision relating to accommodation agreed to, it would make Section 51 of the principal Act redundant. If that is so, the present Section 50 would have the same effect. Section 51 deals specifically with premises within the cities of Perth and Fremantle. Therefore to say that the clause would make it redundant is just too ridiculous. I repeat that the clause would only remove the provision relating to a minimum of two bedrooms, and would give the court complete discretion.

Reference was also made by the Chief Secretary to what I had said about hotels in the Kalgoorlie area, and his remarks in that regard were based on the report from the Licensing Court, and its recommendations. He said, in effect, that the court has in the past allowed hotels in Kalgoorlie to close a certain number of bedrooms and, on occasions when there has been a big influx of people to the town, open them up again. That could still be done under this measure, and it is an argument in favour of the Bill; because if the court were given discretionary power, it could do the same thing wherever it considered that to be necessary throughout country areas.

On the recommendation of the Licensing Court the Chief Secretary said also that he did not consider that premises declared non-residential, as proposed under the Bill, should pay the £150 additional licence fee, or that it would form a sound basis for a satisfactory fund from which to compensate hotels which the court decreed should provide accommodation. It is not the intention of the Bill to provide from that source a big fund for the Licensing Court to handle and administer.

All the measure seeks, through this special fee of £150, is to create a trust fund in order to assist those hotels which the court decided must continue to provide accommodation at a substantial loss. It in no way seeks fully to recoup those licensees for their losses. All I seek is that the measure should be given a trial in this regard for the first year to see whether the fund would be sufficient to do what is proposed.

I cannot understand the opposition of the Licensing Court to the Bill. Throughout his speech the Chief Secretary,

made no mention of the Crown Solicitor having been consulted in regard to the Bill, yet he took the word of the Licensing Court that the provision I have mentioned would render Section 51 redundant. If anyone should be an authority on that phase of the measure, it is the Crown Solicitor, and I do not know why he was not consulted instead of the chairman of the Licensing Court.

According to the Chief Secretary, the court did not consider it in the best interests of the district concerned to agree to these provisions. Why not? It makes me wonder whether the court is desirous of carrying out the work which the Government wishes it to do, which is to see that the hotels are run properly, and that sufficient and decent accommodation is provided. As I explained when introducing the Bill, the position regarding accommodation in hotels throughout the country areas has become chaotic, and the court has done very little to clean up that chaos.

That was more or less admitted to me by the chairman of the Licensing Court, who said that the court did not have discretionary power; yet now, when the power is proposed under this Bill, apparently the court does not want to use it. Is that because the Licensing Court does not want to do this work?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They have the power, all right.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Is it that the court does not want to clean up the existing position? Otherwise, there is, in my opinion, not the slightest reason for the opposition which has been shown to the Bill. I would like members to consider the measure as a serious and genuine attempt to ensure that accommodation in hotels in country districts is brought up to scratch, and that licensees and owners of hotels are given opportunity to do that, and that the court should see that it is done.

I have here a list of transfers of licences; and if one examines the number—these are not all of them—one sees that during June, July and August of this year there were 28 transfers of country hotels, and another 10 in September, or a total of 38 in four months. Looking down the list, one finds that not one licensee who relinquished the lease of a hotel took on another one.

That shows that the state of affairs in country districts is such that once a licensee relinquishes the lease of a hotel, he will not consider taking on another one, the main reason being the position with regard to accommodation. Had members gone into the question thoroughly, they would have been aware of the chaotic condition existing in country hotels. I repeat that there is nothing mandatory about the measure, but that it would give the

court the necessary discretionary power to clean up the position that exists. I hope the Bill will be agreed to.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	13
Noes	....	....	....	12
Majority for				1

Ayes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. W. F. Willsee
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. J. J. Garrigan
Hon. A. R. Jones	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. A. F. Griffith
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; Hon. N. E. Baxter in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 50 amended:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member in charge of the Bill did not explain exactly what this amendment means. If it is agreed to, it will simply make drinking houses of hotels, and no accommodation will be provided.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: No.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Why did not the hon. member explain it?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I explained it on the second reading.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not prepared to trust the Licensing Court in regard to this. Conditions of hotels today are due entirely to the lack of control by the Licensing Court. As I have said repeatedly in this Chamber, the revenue has been taken from hotels and given to clubs, with the result that hotels are becoming impoverished and licensees cannot keep their houses in order and make them attractive.

At times I have been in Kalgoorlie and have not been able to obtain accommodation, although I do believe that the Goldfields probably have too many hotels. On one occasion I went to the police and asked them to find accommodation for me. They could not do so, and I slept in a motorcar at the racecourse. This Bill will make hotels even worse, and I hope members will not agree to it.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Sir Charles Latham is absolutely astray in this matter when he says that this will make hotels worse than ever. I have taken out of the Act two words which refer to sleeping rooms, and I have given discretionary power to the court to say how many sleeping rooms shall be provided. The court will be given the power to say that a hotel shall provide 100 sleeping rooms or two, and it will not be easily persuaded in this regard. I do not think Sir Charles understands what the clause aims at. There is nothing mandatory about it.

There is a new hotel being built on Albany Highway at Cannington. The contractors have spent months putting in sleeping rooms, and I guarantee that they will hardly ever be used, except at Show time. That is a classical example of what is happening throughout the country. There are 20-roomed hotels with about four people staying in them.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: This Bill will serve at least one useful purpose; it will indicate that the Licensing Act needs a thorough overhaul. I do not suppose that many people realise that at present it is mandatory for the holder of a publican's general licence, or a wayside house licensee, to provide stabling accommodation sufficient for six horses at least and a sufficient supply of wholesome and usual provender for same.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You know very well that they use the stables for motorcars.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The absurd position is that if they do not provide that, they are committing a breach of the Act.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They could have their licence refused.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The section which Mr. Baxter seeks to amend makes it mandatory for the holder of a wayside house licence to provide two sitting-rooms which, in many instances, is utterly unnecessary. I think the Bill has considerable merit, because it gives the court discretion in this regard.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do not you think it has discretion today and uses it?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The court has not any discretion, because the section lays it down that wayside house licensees must provide two sitting-rooms. There is a wayside house licence at a place called Kathleen Valley and the licensee has to provide two sitting-rooms. That is absurd.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He has not two sitting-rooms.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: But he must have under this section.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But the court uses its discretion.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: But it has no power to use it.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is why I think Mr. Baxter's Bill will indicate that some sections of the Act are long overdue for overhaul.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think the whole Act is due for an overhaul; but that is not the function of a private member. Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 9.45 to 10.15 p.m.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—RETAILING OF MOTOR SPIRITS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

HON. F. D. WILLMOTT (South-West) [10.17]: During the debate on this Bill, a good deal has been said about the motor-spirit wholesaler and a good deal about the reseller; but I have heard very little mention made of those all-important people, the consumers. There are six wholesalers, approximately 1,200 retailers, and something like 100,000 consumers—motorists—without whom neither the wholesaler nor the retailer could exist. So I am forced to ask myself: Would these consumers be better off if the Bill were passed? And I come to the conclusion that they would not.

The resellers have, in many cases, since solo marketing came into existence, been educated to a large extent by the wholesalers, so that they could put the wholesalers' product on the market to better advantage. Many times, before single-brand marketing came into existence, I went into service stations in the country to have my car serviced—filled with petrol, radiator checked, and so on—and the attendant would come out and plaster dirty hands all over the car, not caring at all. Frequently in country wayside garages this was largely because the attendants did not know any better.

The wholesalers have helped to educate these people in the best way to present their product to the consumer, simply because the wholesaler, like most other business people, wishes to see his produce put before the public to the best possible advantage. I think that has been to a large

degree achieved under solo marketing; more so than before that scheme came into existence.

We know that many stations have been painted and renovated at, I think, the cost of the wholesaler, and I ask myself why. Is it because the wholesalers are philanthropists? I do not think so. I believe it is done because the wholesalers like to have their goods put before the consuming public in the most attractive way possible. That, I think, is the main reason why they assist many of the retailers to make their businesses more attractive to the public. I do not think the resellers are philanthropists; not by any means.

I had an experience some years ago in this matter. It occurred before there were many motor trucks or tractors in my area. When an oil company first established a depot there, we, the farmers, were getting petrol in drums—not many of us, because there were only about half a dozen motor trucks and a couple of tractors in the district. We would go to the depot and pick up our petrol in drums.

The reseller in town kicked up a tremendous fuss to the wholesaler because we, the farmers, were able to get our petrol at, I think, 5d. a gallon below what we had to pay for it out of the bowser. After a considerable fuss by this reseller, the farmers and the wholesaler agreed to meet him to see if we could arrive at some arrangement with him. So, we met him and asked him to put up a proposition.

He was requesting that the farmers should have their drums filled at his bowser, and he was prepared to give the farmers a rebate of 1d. out of the 5d. that we were getting from the wholesaler. Of course, we just wiped that reseller off. So I repeat, the retailers are not philanthropists any more than are the wholesalers. In that instance the retailer was out to get all he could at the expense of the farmer.

I maintain that the wholesalers are not always the big bad wolves that some members would like to make out that they are. Then I had to ask myself: Have I had any complaints about the one-brand marketing from the consuming public—the people who, to my mind, really matter in this business. I have not had a single complaint from the consuming public—the motorists. All I have come in contact with have been in favour of the better facilities that have been offered since the one-brand marketing came into existence.

Then I asked myself: Have I had complaints from the reseller? I can only speak for my own district. What the position is in the metropolitan area I leave to the members of that area to say; but I have not had any complaints from my district, though many approaches have been made to me by resellers to do whatever I could to reject this legislation. I

have here half a dozen telegrams that have arrived within the last couple of days. They have come from all round the South-West province—from Boyup Brook to Witchcliffe, and from Busselton to Bridgetown, and so on. They are all from resellers owning their own businesses.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: You are sure of that?

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Yes.

Hon. L. C. Diver: All inspired!

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: No, not inspired; certainly not by me. They may have been inspired, but not by me. The fact remains that I have received these telegrams asking me to reject this legislation, but no approaches have been made to me from any reseller in that area to support it. I can only go on what I am told by the people I represent.

Then I thought I would give consideration to the cost of petrol to the consumer during the last four years. We know that during the last four inflationary years the price of petrol has increased by only 1d.; while, during the same period, the standard of petrol offered to the consumers has gone up.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It was not before time; it was previously a pretty poor standard.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Maybe; but the motorist is getting a better standard now at a cost of only 1d. more. To whom did that 1d. go? Did it go to the reseller? It did. It did not go to the wholesaler. So the only rise in the cost of petrol has gone to the reseller.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: And it is the only rise the reseller got for a great number of years.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: That might be so; but during those four years the wholesaler got no rise.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He was doing pretty well before.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: He might have been. I think the resellers were also doing pretty well before.

Members would have us believe that they were doing pretty well before; better than they are now. With that, I do not agree. Mr. Roche said, "No satisfied reseller need be concerned with the provisions of the Bill." I cannot agree with that statement.

The satisfied resellers referred to by Mr. Roche might very soon become dissatisfied resellers, because I think there is a great danger that this legislation could rebound on the resellers in this way: At present, approximately 10.5 per cent. of the service stations are controlled by the wholesalers.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What do you mean by "controlled"? Do you mean as far as the buildings are concerned?

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I mean that 10.5 per cent. of the service stations are controlled by wholesalers.

Hon. L. C. Diver: A great many are owned by the oil companies.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Some of them are owned by the wholesalers, and some are controlled under mortgage; but approximately 10.5 per cent. are controlled by the wholesalers. If this legislation became law, there would be nothing to prevent those wholesalers buying more service stations. I do not think for one moment that the resellers would be prepared to protect their brethren to the extent that they would refuse any attractive offer for their service stations made by a wholesaler. Therefore, this legislation could very easily rebound on the reseller by the wholesaler buying more service stations at attractive prices. They could select the best sites and virtually they could control the industry more than it is controlled today.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Could not that be done now?

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: There is no incentive for the wholesalers to do it now; but if they were forced to do it, that could easily be their attitude. Most of the resellers entered the industry with their eyes open. They were not coerced into it.

During the debate, a good deal has been said about the building of new service stations, and it is claimed that in many instances they are not required. It has been said that this trend is a direct result of one-brand marketing. In that regard, if the Bill becomes law, I can see further danger with a dissatisfied reseller in any country town installing two or three pumps at his own expense so that he can sell other brands of petrol. In all probability, the immediate result would be that his rivals in that town would follow his example, so that before long there would be a whole bunch of petrol pumps installed at the expense of the individual reseller, purely to meet the wishes of one dissatisfied man.

The consequence would be that the number of pumps in that town would be increased fivefold. All those installations would be made at the expense of the resellers, which would eventually be to the detriment of the consumer, because it is certain that he would be asked to pay more for his petrol so that the reseller could cover the cost of installing extra pumps. As I said before, I am most concerned about those hundreds of thousands of motorists. They are the people who will be most affected if this proposal is agreed to.

I think it was Dr. Hislop who referred to the rest-rooms and toilet facilities that are provided by some service stations in the country. Those are facilities that we never saw before one-brand marketing was introduced. That is an extra service

that is rendered by the reseller for the benefit of the motorist. I am certain that the facilities provided now are far better than those ever before offered to the motorist, and I repeat that that is a direct result of the one-brand marketing system.

Some reference was made by Mr. Diver, by interjection, to the effect that a £2 deposit was charged on drums bought by farmers and others who obtain their petrol in bulk. I think that every farmer and everyone who purchased petrol in drums was responsible for that £2 deposit charge being made. I do not exclude myself when I say that, because not all farmers, when they took delivery of the drums, returned them, with the result that there were thousands of drums lying around their farms. The drums were used for all sorts of purposes, although owned by the wholesaler. If a farmer wanted to scald a pig, he would cut the top off a petrol drum and use it for that purpose. A farmer at that time was charged for the drum on a separate invoice and not in cash.

Hon. L. C. Diver: How much?

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: From memory, I could not say.

Hon. L. C. Diver: He was charged £1.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Originally, it was 10s. and then it went to £2.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: It does not matter what the deposit on the drum was. If members are perfectly honest, they will admit that farmers got into a terrible tangle over these drums. I have had experience of it myself. They had used the drums belonging to the wholesalers for all sorts of purposes; and when settlement day arrived, argument followed, and in many instances farmers stated that they had never received the drums recorded on their accounts and, in a great number of cases, the oil companies waived the charge that had been made on those drums. The result was that the wholesalers were forced to impose a £2 deposit charge on a petrol drum. To be perfectly fair, one can only say that the wholesalers were entitled to make that charge. They are not selling the drum to the buyer and, when the drum is returned, the £2 is refunded.

Hon. L. Craig: The same applies when one buys a bottle of coca cola.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Yes. The same principle applies to beer casks and cylinders containing gas.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Do the companies always refund the deposit?

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Always. Various companies make the refund in different ways. Some companies post me a cheque, while others credit my account when the drum is returned. There is no doubt that the petrol resellers are justified in making that charge, especially after the experience they had with farmers in the past. After

all, £2 would not cover the cost of manufacturing the drum. It would cost a great more than that. The deposit is merely to ensure that there is some chance of the drum being returned, because no doubt many were lost before this charge was made.

The argument that has arisen between the wholesaler and retailer constitutes an internal wrangle within the industry. I do not think it is the function of Parliament to legislate for the settlement of such a quarrel. The person who should be considered more than anyone else is the motorist or the consumer, and he is getting a better service by one-brand marketing of petrol than he received before.

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

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1 and 2 made by the Council, and had agreed to No. 3 subject to a further amendment.

The PRESIDENT: I draw the attention of members to the fact that when I am reading messages to the House I desire complete silence.

Personal Explanation.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: I wish to offer my apologies to you, Sir. I was out of the Chamber for a moment, and was endeavouring to collect my thoughts as to whether the message you have just read to the House concerned me. I did not intend to be rude to the Chair, and I hope that you will forgive me.

The President: I accept the hon. member's apology. Is this the hon. member's Bill?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: If it is the Administration Act Amendment Bill, I have control of the measure in this House.

BILL—JUDGES' SALARIES AND PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [10.45]: This Bill meets at least to some degree what I consider to be serious disabilities suffered by the judges of the Supreme Court of Western Australia in recent years. On previous occasions I drew attention to the relatively low salaries paid to the judiciary in this State. Even the proposed increase is not as great as it might have been. All this Bill does is to bring the salaries of the Chief Justice and the puisne judges to the same

level of salary paid to the judges of the Supreme Court, Tasmania. The Bill does not seek to increase their salaries to the level of those in South Australia; they are very much below the level of those in Victoria and New South Wales.

It has been expressed by Ministers on previous occasions that the salaries of judges should be compared with ministerial allowances. Because those allowances were set at a certain figure, there was an opinion amongst Ministers that the salaries of judges should be no higher. As I said last night, the two cases are by no means comparable. As a member of Parliament a Minister of the Crown may have outside interests and private sources of income; on the other hand, when judges accept their elevated positions, they are precluded from participating in any business activity whatsoever. In brief, a judge has to depend on his salary. As complete independence is an essential feature of the judiciary, I think that all judges should be remunerated adequately.

It may interest members to know that 50 years ago the "take home" salary of the Chief Justice of Western Australia was £2,000. Today it has risen to only £2,800 after 50 years. Under the Bill, the Chief Justice will receive £4,000 per annum on which income tax is payable. This amounts to £1,200, leaving the net figure at £2,800, compared with £2,000 50 years ago. When we take into account the cost of living and the decrease in monetary values since that time, we can readily appreciate that the present salaries paid to the judiciary are nothing out of the ordinary. In reply to a question which I asked the Chief Secretary a few days ago, I learned that the proposed salaries of £4,000 for the Chief Justice and £3,500 for the puisne judges are little more than the salary paid to the chairman of the Betting Control Board, who receives £3,290.

When reading the law journal the other day I came across this extract, which is worth while quoting in order to point out to members the qualities and characteristics looked for in the judiciary. The quotation reads—

Judges learned in the law, not merely the law in books but, something far more difficult to acquire, the law as applied in action in the courtroom; judges deeply versed in the mysteries of human nature and adept in the discovery of the truth in the discordant testimony of fallible human beings; judges beholden to no man, independent and honest and—equally important—believed by all men to be independent and honest; judges, above all, fired with consuming zeal to mete out justice according to law to every man, woman and child that may come before them and to preserve individual freedom against any aggression of government; judges with the humility born of wisdom, patient and untiring

in the search of truth, and keenly conscious of the evils arising in a workaday world from any unnecessary delay—judges with all these attributes are not easy to find, but which of these traits dare we eliminate if we are to hope to attain even-handed justice?

We should bear in mind that the judiciary is one of the three great branches of our system of Government. The necessity to attract men of the highest calibre and integrity to judiciary positions should be ever present in the minds of parliamentarians and Ministers. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [10.58] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that a short time ago there appeared in several places a headline couched in these words: "Perth Airport Struggles for Recognition". Those words referred to the struggle by the Perth Airport to gain recognition as an international airport. The member for Cottesloe, who introduced this private member's Bill, has done a great deal to gain such recognition for Perth Airport. The measure which I now introduce on his behalf to amend the Licensing Act will permit the Licensing Court to grant a liquor licence to the Perth Airport.

It has been said that tinkering with the Licensing Act by private members is sometimes dangerous. Emphasis has frequently been laid upon that point; but I think that when members have heard

my remarks on the Bill, they will readily agree that this will represent a step in the progress of the State. Members will recall that before the Perth Airport received recognition as an international airport, there was a struggle to receive that recognition, and overseas aircraft were by-passing this State. Today we have the Qantas Super-Constellation Kangaroo Service operating between Sydney and London, and the aircraft stop at the Perth Airport.

Clause 3 is the principal provision in the Bill; it is actually the meat of the whole subject. If members see fit to pass the Bill, it will amend the principal Act by providing that a licence may be granted for premises which are situated at the airport known as the Perth Airport, and which are known as the Overseas Terminal Building, or such other premises so situate as the court may consider suitable premises, and premises which are situated at any other airport in the State as the Governor may from time to time, on the recommendation of the court, by proclamation, declare.

When the Bill was introduced in another place, there was a small protest from a section of the community on the question of the advisability or otherwise of amending the Act to empower the court to grant such a licence. I suggest that if the Act be amended, it will definitely be a step in the right direction.

I should like members to appreciate, as I am sure they do whenever they visit the airport, that the companies concerned, particularly the Qantas company, have gone to considerable trouble to provide amenities for their patrons, and it is desirable that we should move with the times so that the people within the meaning of this measure that visit the airport may enjoy the facilities provided by a licence.

The licence, if granted, will be a restricted one. Of necessity it will be restricted because, in order to overcome the difficulties raised by critics and to provide the desired facilities for aircraft passengers, it will not permit of abuse of a licence of this nature. The Bill does include those restrictive clauses. The licensed premises will be open for a period of 30 minutes before the arrival at the airport of any aircraft conveying passengers into the State, and for a period not exceeding six hours during the time after its arrival that the aircraft is grounded at the airport. Further, the premises may be open for a period of 30 minutes after the departure from the airport of any aircraft conveying passengers out of the State.

When the Bill was being discussed in another place, the member for Cottesloe found it necessary to approve of certain amendments being made in this Chamber. This was done on account of the difficulty of getting the Bill reprinted at this late hour had the amendments been made

in that Chamber. I shall point out the various clauses and move the amendments accordingly.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Can you give us any idea of those amendments now?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. The people who will be able to avail themselves of these facilities will be those who travel into the State on aircraft from outside the State.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: What about the people who go out?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They, too, are covered by the Bill. The various people who will be permitted the privilege of using these licensed premises are mentioned in the proposed new Section 44C. I thank Mr. Heenan for raising that question, because it spares me the necessity for bringing the matter forward. The people who will be permitted to use the licensed premises are those coming into the State from outside the State, and people going to the airport to meet them.

It is the custom of Qantas Airways Ltd. to provide at the airport, in premises which are delightfully equipped, meals where necessary, and certain privileged persons are able to have a drink of alcohol of a light type with their meals. I am told that this description pertains to sherry and light wines served with dinner. Unfortunately, the Licensing Act would preclude a person such as the one envisaged by Mr. Heenan who goes to the airport to meet an aircraft passenger.

One can imagine a Qantas aircraft arriving at the Perth airport. This is a transit airport, and the people who alight come from all over the world. They bring with them the money of their country and the business of their country, and they are frequently met by business representatives living here. How ludicrous it is for a prominent Perth businessman to go to the Perth airport to meet a prominent businessman from overseas with the idea of engaging in business conversation, and to find that the aircraft passenger has to say, "I am sorry I cannot ask you to have a Scotch and soda or other alcoholic drink because it is not permitted under your Licensing Act, so I will take my beverage while you look on." The Bill will endeavour to overcome that anomaly.

It has been suggested that a provision of this sort will be open to abuse, but I do not think that there is any material foundation whatever for such fear. It was said that pilots would take advantage of licensed premises at the airport to the detriment of their flying career. I do not think there is any ground for that. I have done a little aircraft travelling in peacetime, and I did a lot during the war; and I know that the men who engage in the profession of aviation have a high sense of responsibility.

They appreciate that they are in charge of aircraft worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, and they have had to work hard to become licensed airline pilots, for which they receive good remuneration. Therefore, they are hardly likely to risk their own lives and the lives of their passengers in the manner suggested by some critics of the Bill.

I repeat that the measure will be a step forward in the progress of this State. There are many parts of the world where the facilities which I hope to gain for the Perth Airport are already in existence.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Where are they?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In Cairo and Djakarta. I understand that the facilities at Djakarta are available for 24 hours of the day; but facilities such as I am proposing for the Perth Airport are not provided in any of the other States. That, however, is no reason why Western Australia should not take the lead; and if the arrangement proves to be satisfactory, no doubt other States will follow our example.

Qantas aircraft, in operating the Kangaroo Service, observe the timetable along these lines. The aircraft leaves Sydney for London, via Perth. It arrives in Perth at 1420 hours and leaves at 1700 hours, so that it has a period of three hours at the airport. The company provides for its passengers excellent toilet and bathroom accommodation, and delightful refreshment rooms where meals are served.

Everything is done for the comfort of the passengers. Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that the passengers patronising this service should be able to enjoy a drink with their meals. A privileged few have this advantage—a first-class passenger can have a drink with his meals; but a second-class passenger may not, although he may be sitting in the same dining-room and at a table adjacent to that of the first-class passenger. The Bill will tidy up a situation such as that.

When some slight controversy occurred during the passage of the Bill in another place, "The Weekend Mail" published a well thought out article on this question. I do not always agree with that paper, especially when it goes near to committing a breach of parliamentary privilege. The paper dated the 15th October, 1955, contained the following:—

Just How Drunk Can You be in an Airliner?

At a casual glance, trying to mix alcohol and 100-octane aircraft fuel would seem a pretty silly idea.

Just think of it—crew slobbering over the controls; £1,000,000 worth of aircraft doing beer barrel rolls; passengers roaring with drunken mirth as they hang in their safety belts or

bounce in and out of the galley; the one teetotal passenger frozen with horror.

But—a sobering thought—it has not happened.

Liquor has been served on aircraft overseas for decades. It has been served on Australia's interstate airlines for years and on Australia's international airline for years.

What's more, it's served with considerable decorum—with considerably more decorum than in other more, shall we say, conventional forms of transport that we can think of.

The steward knows, the aircraft captain knows, the airline knows that it's an offence against Air Navigation Regulations to carry a drunk on an aircraft.

The penalties are heavy, very heavy. The offence could even lead to a skipper getting grounded. Even if the airline company in the face of a grave offence continued to allow an aircraft pilot to operate after a conviction, it's the Department of Civil Aviation that renews the licence.

And it's the Department of Civil Aviation that polices the regulation.

Other regulations.

But the department is not content to just police the getting-drunk-on-airborn-alcohol aspect. It starts its activities long before that.

Under Air Navigational Regulations it's also an offence to be drunk and on an airport. It's an offence to endeavour to board an aircraft while drunk.

And if anyone conceals his drunkenness and still gets on board, the aircraft captain, if he detects it, will very soon get him off again.

Yes? Yes, it has happened. Not so long ago it happened at Perth Airport. A passenger's condition was not evident until he was asked to change his seat. He became abusive. The captain asked him to leave the aircraft. He refused.

A call over the aircraft's radio to control. A call by control's direct line to the tarmac—and a very tall, very strong and very imperturbable Irishman was at the door of the aircraft.

The passenger departed, under escort, from the Aircraft. And, further, from the premises.

The bogey of aircrews drinking in flight has been raised. Well, Air Navigation Regulations are quite adamant on that point. No member of an aircraft crew can drink 12 hours before take-off. As for a drink in flight . . .

Well, it takes a long time to get the qualifications for a flying job. The pay is good. The prestige is considerable.

The aircraft costs £1,000,000. To chuck the lot away for one glass or one sip of beer . . .

As for liquor at the airport for overseas passengers, we find that every country in the world having international air terminals allows liquor to be served there—excepting Australia.

We find that though the passenger can be trusted to drink in the air, he evidently cannot be trusted to drink on the ground—in Australia at least.

We also find that Perth Airport is the most congenial airport in Australia and in world class. It handles big time businessmen who like a drink and who like carrying out business deals when sober.

They are the men we want to see fly in this State. They won't like being treated like children.

That is a very sound article, and the objections raised by some members of the public in that regard are groundless. The people who use aircraft travel are of the type mentioned in that article, and those who come to this State are principally businessmen. It would be desirable that businessmen, who are in fact ambassadors of their own countries, should be able to return to their homes and say, "The service and conditions at Perth Airport, Western Australia, are something we wish to talk about and copy." We would be going a long way towards achieving that by passing this measure, which is a step in the right direction.

A cartoonist—as cartoonists sometimes will—drew a very excellent cartoon when the Bill was introduced in another place, with regard to the circumstances that might arise at Perth Airport. You may have seen it, Mr. President, and I could not help admiring its perfection and the manner in which it was produced, although it was drawn in cartoon spirit. I think we can allay the fears depicted in it if we appreciate the fact that Commonwealth police are constantly present at the airport and would be keeping constant vigil there, for obvious reasons.

In the event of Perth Airport being granted a licence that would still apply. The licence would be granted to the commissionaire of what is known as the overseas terminal building, which is looked after by the Department of Civil Aviation; and I think members need have no fear of the effect of passing this Bill.

The measure specifies the persons who may be served on these licensed premises, and pays particular attention to the hours during which they may be served. It states also that alcohol must not be served in the bottle, and so there is no chance of liquor being taken away from the premises or into an aircraft in bottle form. That

should further allay any fear that the measure, if passed, might have detrimental results.

I commend the Bill to the House, and ask members to support it, as it has nothing of an undesirable nature about it. I will be pleased to hear the comments of members, and would point out that the amendments proposed to be made when the Bill is in Committee are simple, the principal one seeking to strike out the words, "and 30 minutes after." Another place considered that it would be undesirable to leave these licensed premises open for 30 minutes after the aircraft had departed.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What is wrong with that?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think there would be anything wrong with it; but Mr. Ross Hutchinson was pleased to strike those words out, as a number of members thought he should, because people like those, the subject of the cartoon I mentioned, might continue drinking after the aircraft had left. Members were anxious that that should not occur.

The Bill provides that the licensed premises may be open for a period of six hours after the arrival of an aircraft. The normal period for an aircraft to remain at the airport is approximately three hours, although it might be grounded for 24 hours or longer if some mechanical fault developed. In that case there would be no objection, as the passengers would probably come into Perth. It is felt that we should allow this period of six hours in case an aircraft does not get away at the scheduled time. I commend the measure to members and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [11.25]: I have been interested in the comprehensive explanation of the measure just given by Mr. Griffith and do not think the provision of this amenity at the airport could do any harm whatever. Overseas air passengers have it in other parts of the world and would appreciate it here, so I think we should fall into line in this respect and thus achieve something that is probably long overdue.

Air travel is still a somewhat risky undertaking, the highest standards of care are required, and the personnel in charge of aircraft must be beyond question as regards sobriety. As Mr. Griffith said, liquor has for years past been obtainable at airports in other parts of the world, and apparently the position is handled adequately. I have the greatest respect for the integrity, organising ability and wisdom of the major airline companies and believe this amenity will be well handled, and that

the interests and welfare of aircraft passengers will in no way be jeopardised by what is proposed. I therefore support the Bill.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [11.27]: As a rule I do not like to see legislation introduced to lower the efficiency of our hotels; because, if we take custom from them, that must be reflected in the standard of accommodation offering and that is something that we do not want. In this case, however, I do not think any hotel will be affected. I do not understand, however, why one boarding an aircraft at Darwin could come to Perth and use these facilities, while a passenger boarding an airplane at Broome or Wyndham could not use them.

I suppose it must be realised that this measure has been brought down because ours is now an international airport, which we should foster in every way. Aircraft on the Kangaroo route from London pass through Rome, Cairo, Karachi, Singapore and Djakarta to Perth and Sydney. With the exception of Perth and Sydney, all those airports have these facilities which, in several instances, are of a wonderful standard. I do not think Perth should be the one place where those facilities are not provided. We should ignore the position in Sydney and lead the way. I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [11.30]: I remarked last night that, on principle, I was opposed to a spate of private members' Bills being introduced into either House of Parliament. I expressed the view that in most cases the ideas, if sound, should be fathered by the Government of the day. I withdraw any objection in regard to this Bill, because I said at the time that if a man introduces a Bill connected with his own constituency, or with a specialised subject in which he might be regarded as an expert, I felt that he was qualified and entitled to introduce such a measure.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That was exactly my position in regard to the banks.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is the case here. I think Mr. Hutchinson was instrumental in helping to have the Perth air terminal internationally recognised. He is interested in both military and civil aviation and he has done a considerable amount of work in interesting the authorities, both Federal and State, in the claims of the Perth Airport to be raised to international status. That has been done. Now he has suggested that this amenity, which is common to other airports, similarly situated in other parts of the world, should be provided here. I entirely agree with him.

Those of us who have had the good fortune to travel abroad have noticed that liquor is provided as a matter of course

in boat travel, train travel and air travel. Not that I have travelled far outside the State in air travel; but I have had the pleasure of conversing with those who have returned from trips abroad and have kept a record of their trips in the form of menus, or other little mementos which give a clear indication of the facilities and amenities provided on flying boats and at the various ports of call.

There is no reason why we should not provide the same amenities here. If I may digress a little, I think that our East-West trains, which are equal to the best in the world, should have facilities for the purchase of liquor in reasonable quantities as is done on almost every other railway service in the world. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Metropolitan— in reply) [11.34]: I am grateful to members for the support they have given to the Bill, but I would like to clear a point that has arisen in Mr. Barker's mind regarding passengers from Wyndham and those from Darwin. The intention of the measure is to provide for a certain class of passengers who come into our State from overseas. If members read the clause—

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

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In that case there is no need for me to deal with that point. I thank members for their support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. E. M. Davies in the Chair; **Hon. A. F. Griffith** in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Sections 44A, 44B and 44C added:

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I stated in my second reading speech, the sponsor of the Bill in another place gave certain undertakings. This was necessary because, if the amendments had been moved in that Chamber, it would have been necessary to reprint the Bill, and we would not have been able to deal with it this evening. I move an amendment—

That the words "or visiting" in line 5, page 3, be struck out.

Members in another place felt that these words might include the general public who might be there for the purpose of visiting the airport.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I want to have an open mind on this. I appreciate the obligation given by the sponsor of the Bill in another place; but I am wondering whether the words "or visiting", if removed, will mean that drinks will not be supplied to friends of passengers. I would like other members' opinions on the point.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I, too, am rather confused with this. I thought the object of the Bill was to afford an opportunity for visitors to meet and entertain passengers of overseas aircraft. If these words are taken out, it might affect the original purpose of the Bill. It is difficult, when one reads the clause, to visualise what is meant by the words "utilising or visiting". Who are visiting and who are utilising the airport? What is the difference?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is my point; the words are redundant.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The last four words are not necessary at all. I think we should stop at the word "persons".

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I hope Dr. Hislop will not move an amendment in that direction. I am simply taking out two redundant words. It appears, from a reading of the clause, that people will utilise the airport whether they are going there for the purpose of boarding or meeting an aircraft.

Hon. L. Craig: Or going there merely for a drink.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They can go there only under the terms set out.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think there is a great distinction between the two words. I could take out a party of visitors to the airport, merely to see it, and that would be "visiting".

The Minister for the North-West: What is the position of passengers on North-West aircraft?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They would not get any benefit from this.

The Minister for the North-West: They are "utilising" the airport.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then they will get the benefit of it. I merely wished to point out the great difference there is between the two words.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That the words "intrastate or" be inserted after the word "passengers" in line 16, page 3.

That will allow the people of the North-West to share in the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I hope Dr. Hislop will not persist with his amendment, because it will destroy the intention of the Bill. If we take a trip to Darwin, it is necessary to get out of the aircraft at 5 o'clock in the morning. We have the T.A.A. service, coming in at 7.45, the A.N.A. plane coming in at some other time, and the Dove from Kalgoorlie at yet another time. It is not the intention of the Bill to grant a licence for these facilities to be open 24 hours a day. That would be contrary to the Licensing Act.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think it is a bit futile, like the turtle. Reference has been made to the Constellation which arrives at 4.30 a.m. and leaves at 7 for Singapore, yet the argument against my amendment is that the plane from Darwin arrives at 5 in the morning. We should not make a distinction between people travelling into this State, east-west, and those travelling intrastate. The people coming from the east can buy a bottle of Scotch.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Only a small bottle.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: There is nothing to stop them buying half a dozen. I do not see why people coming from the east should get these facilities and those coming down from Darwin or up from Albany should be denied them. If my amendment is not accepted, I will vote against the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I support Dr. Hislop's amendment; without it, the measure would create class distinction.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Oh no!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Liquor is to be available to overseas passengers but not to intrastate passengers. A person arrives from Darwin at 7 p.m. Western Australian time. There is no facility for him to have a drink during that 2,000-mile flight, but passengers on interstate and overseas planes can order liquor from the hostess while in flight. People arriving from the North-West might be anxious to have a drink on arrival. They could arrive in Perth after the hotels had closed and not be able to get a drink until 9 a.m. the next day.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not unless they stayed at the hotel.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: In the railway refreshment room the bar is open to provide drink for train passengers travelling through country areas.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not at night.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: At any time. In this measure, however, a person arriving from Wyndham might be refused a drink. If this facility is worth giving at all, it is worth giving to all passengers or none.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry the Minister should think that I am endeavouring to create class distinction.

The Minister for the North-West: Not you, but the Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister should appreciate that Perth Airport is a transit airport. It would be different if it were a terminal airport. People who travel from Wyndham to Perth are arriving at their destination; they go home.

The Minister for the North-West: So are people from Sydney to Perth

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Not on the Kangaroo route. The licence is to be granted to the premises constructed by the Qantas Aircraft Corporation, and that is the fundamental difference. This Bill seeks to assist those who have had long journeys. The Minister is talking about those people who use Perth Airport as a terminal. It is not those people who need consideration.

The Minister for the North-West: Where does your Bill prohibit a passenger to Perth by the Kangaroo service?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It does not.

The Minister for the North-West: This is his terminal port.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He has come from overseas, not from Meekatharra.

The Minister for the North-West: He is different.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He may be so; but I am not endeavouring to create class distinction.

Hon. W. F. Willesee: The Bill merely covers Qantas passengers.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; it covers passengers interstate and those coming from overseas. The amendment would allow the premises to remain open longer than is desired. The Minister referred to the Licensing Act. I would refer members to Section 36, which relates to the railway refreshment-room. In that it states that it shall remain open half an hour before and half an hour after. So there is a limitation, and that is what this Bill proposes.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Surely, under the terms of the measure, they can go to any other port. I do not think there is any need for it. The Executive Council would have the final say; but application could be made to the court and, by proclamation, the Governor could issue a licence.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The explanation is very simple. If Sir Charles would refer to the Stephenson plan, about which we have heard so much—

The Chief Secretary: And about which you will hear a great deal more either tonight or tomorrow.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —he would see that there is a possibility that Perth Airport will be moved from one place to another. This Bill provides for that eventuality.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Would it not be the Perth Airport?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; but it might be situated at Armadale.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not see where the Bill is confined to the Kangaroo service. It refers to passengers flying into the State. What is wrong with those flying within the

State? Passengers come from Victoria to Western Australia and are able to get a drink; but if they come from Wyndham to Perth or from Meekatharra or from Esperance, they are not. I cannot agree with that.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move an amendment—

That the words "and thirty minutes after" in line 21, page 3, be struck out.

The reason for this is that an undertaking was given in another place that the amendment would be moved here.

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

Clauses 4 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Section 177 amended:

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move an amendment—

That the word "twenty" in line 7, page 5, be struck out and the word "seventy" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move an amendment—

That the words "of Subsection (2)" be inserted after the word "three" in line 9, page 5.

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

Clause 10—Second Schedule amended:

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move an amendment—

That the words "and thirty minutes after" in lines 31 and 32, page 5, be struck out.

This is a consequential amendment.

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

Clause 11, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommendation.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Griffith, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 3.

In Committee.

Hon. E. M. Davies in the Chair, Hon. A. F. Griffith in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Sections 44A, 44B and 44C added:

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have had an opportunity of considering the effect of the amendment moved by Dr. Hislop and

agreed to, and I think it would have an undesirable effect. Members will appreciate that a licence can be granted only if the Licensing Court thinks fit to grant it. If the amendment remains in the Bill, the measure will become applicable to any aircraft of any size arriving from or going to any place at any time on any day. Therefore, if the court granted a licence in those circumstances—and I doubt whether it would—the premises would be open for 24 hours of the day. I move—

That the words "intrastate or" inserted by a previous Committee be struck out.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I cannot see what will be the value of this Bill if these words are deleted. All of the planes that will arrive will have liquor supplied on them right up to the moment of their arrival. All that will be allowed additional by the Bill is that people visiting a plane will be able to have a drink. If the plane is grounded for six hours, the passengers will be able to have a drink; but in the event of a plane being grounded for that length of time, most of the passengers would not stay around the airport but would go and have a look at the city.

They could obtain the liquor they require on the plane up to the moment of landing. So all we are doing is to arrange for the visitors to have a drink for half an hour before the plane arrives and six hours after it is grounded. Planes travelling within the State do not carry alcohol, so passengers cannot get a drink on them under this measure; whereas someone who already has the facilities, can do so. I said that if this were not in I would vote against the third reading, and I still intend to do so.

Hon. H. HEARN: If these words are left in, I think they will effectively kill the Bill. There is no doubt that the court will have to be willing to grant licences to three or four terminals in the vicinity of the Perth Airport. The Bill is to give a special service to special people—people travelling a long way. Also if a traveller lands for a couple of hours and is met by friends, they may have no time to go to the city; but they can have a meal together and avail themselves of these facilities, if they are there. Even if we agreed to insert these words I cannot agree that the measure would come to a practical finish, because I am sure the Licensing Court would not be prepared to say that liquor shall be sold in every place—T.A.A., A.N.A., etc.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I agree with the reasons put forward by Mr. Hearn. The Bill is breaking new ground in Australia, and it is to deal with a special class of traveller. At the same time, I see merit in Dr. Hislop's argument. If I go out to meet an aeroplane from Kalgoorlie, Wyndham or elsewhere it seems normal, if I

have to wait with my friend for half an hour at the aerodrome, to have some amenities provided. I have in mind the viewpoint that we are breaking entirely new ground, and we should show some consideration and gratitude for the sponsor of the Bill. We could very well pass the Bill as it was originally proposed, see how it works out and then, next year or at some future time, extend its provisions if necessary. I think that would be the wisest course. We might do an injustice to the sponsor of the proposition if we overload it at this stage.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I cannot see how this provision will overload the Bill. I would be rather surprised if the Licensing Court granted a licence only for visitors flying interstate.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It would not be much of a licence.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is so. Those people can get all they want on the plane; but the people on the State planes who cannot get anything at all, and who travel thousands of miles in the heat, are to be debarred under the measure. How is this proposition to be policed? It does not say that there must be a bar in every terminal or in every overseas terminal. The Bill says that a bar can be located at any other suitable site.

Perhaps the best way of inducing the Licensing Court to grant a licence for Perth Airport would be to erect proper bar facilities there apart from any terminals, so that all the users of the airport, and not just those of a particular terminal, will be entitled to the same privileges as apply to the interstate passengers.

Hon. H. Hearn: What about serving drink with meals?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That can be done. We were led to believe that this applied only to overseas passengers landing at Perth and passing through; but when we go into the Bill, we find that is not so. It applies to any aircraft entering the State. This means that those on American aircraft, several of which land out there, are entitled to be served, but the ordinary passengers flying within the State are to be debarred altogether. I do not think that is fair and reasonable. With all respect to the mover of the Bill, I cannot see why it should not be made general; otherwise, for a start, it will be hard to police.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It would be a lot harder to police if we left these words in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Not at all. We do not have to separate one set of passengers from another.

Hon. H. Hearn: The overseas planes come in at an entirely different place.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The Bill does not even do what it promised. The court can grant a licence for the overseas terminal or any other suitable site. To give a first-class service there, it will be necessary to have all the business that is offering. The court could grant a licence for a building to be erected to service all air passengers. Why not? The railways do not make any distinction between first and second-class passengers or interstate or intrastate passengers. The railway refreshment-rooms open for so long before the train comes in and for so long after it has departed. No distinction is made. Why should there be any at the airport? If the Bill is to apply only to passengers who fly into the State; and if it is to debar those who fly within the State, I cannot support it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The allegation made by the Minister is not quite accurate. Clause 3 (a) refers to the premises at the airport known as Perth Airport, which premises are known as the Overseas Terminal Building. That isolates the place where the court will have the power to grant a licence.

Hon. H. Hearn: No.

The Minister for the North-West: Read on.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will. The other clause can be cut out. It does not matter. It was put there in case it was necessary, according to the Stephenson plan, to change the situation of the airport. There will only be one licensed premises—namely, the Overseas Terminal Building. This licence will be very restricted.

Hon. H. Hearn: It will not be a money-making concern.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is not intended to be. I have here a letter dated the 22nd August, 1955, from Qantas Empire Airways Ltd., signed by A. J. Quirk. It is addressed to the airport manager, Department of Civil Aviation, Perth Airport, Guildford, and it says—

With reference to our conversation with Mr. Ross Hutchinson last week in regard to an application for a liquor licence at Perth Airport, I would advise the following as my feelings on the matter:—

Passengers in transit from overseas points to Sydney through Perth Airport should at least have the facilities which are granted to transit passengers through a country railway station.

Qantas provide complimentary drinks with meals to its first-class passengers, but tourist-class passengers must pay for their own if required. It can be seen that without a licence to sell drinks

at the airport we are placed in an embarrassing situation. We can give drinks to first-class passengers without contravening any law, but we can neither give nor sell drinks to tourist-class passengers without contravening the laws of the International Air Transport Association or the laws of the State.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Does that imply that if they give a tourist-class passenger a drink they will be breaching some international arrangement?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No. That is a domestic matter that I have not discussed with them.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Which they could easily adjust.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: But which they do not. The original intention of the Bill is that it shall be of a restrictive nature. The premises would be open during certain specified hours on the arrival of an aircraft. If Dr. Hislop's suggestion is agreed to, these licensed premises will be open all the time and so will become public houses. It is not desired that they become public houses. It is desired that the licence shall be restricted.

Let us see who can use the premises. The Bill says that liquor can be served to any passenger who has alighted from or who intends to board the aircraft; to any airline official; or to any officer of the Commonwealth Department of Civil Aviation. If the licence is granted, the Perth Airport cannot become a public house where a person may go after the normal licensing hours to consume liquor.

The Minister for the North-West: That is not the Bill you are reading.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is getting worse and worse.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is not. These are my notes on the Bill. The Bill provides that any passenger who has alighted from or who intends to board the aircraft may be served with liquor. It may be served also—

- (ii) to any airline official or to any officer of the Commonwealth Department of Civil Aviation; or
- (iii) to any person who is in the company of such passenger, official or officer; or
- (b) to any person being served with a meal on the licensed premises in a room set aside for the purpose, if—
 - (i) the liquor is drunk or consumed with the meal; and
 - (ii) the meal is served during the hours prescribed by the Licensing Court as those during which meals shall be obtainable on the premises.

Those are definite restrictions. People can obtain liquor only when a meal is being served. If Dr. Hislop insists on his amendment, it will destroy the whole intention of the Bill.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The situation is most amazing now. Apparently we have a terrific concern for the individual who is flying in a plane and who lands in Perth, and also his friend, in regard to obtaining liquor and a meal. However, the clause as it stands states that this licence shall operate for 30 minutes before the departure of the plane.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is going to operate for 30 minutes before the arrival of the plane.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is exactly what I wanted the hon. member to say. Therefore, the only person who will derive the benefit of obtaining liquor for 30 minutes before the arrival of the plane will be the visitor to the airport who is expecting a friend to arrive; and he is the person with whom we are not concerned. The person who is travelling on the plane will not be able to have a drink at the Perth Airport for 30 minutes before the plane arrives in this State, and the Bill is aimed at giving some further amenities to that person. In my opinion the Bill breaks down with its own words.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: This Bill was seriously discussed in another place, and I am under the impression that amendments were made before it was accepted as an experiment to meet certain conditions for which it was designed. If the Bill is returned to another place with unacceptable amendments in the dying hours of the session, it is in danger of being lost. The measure is in the nature of a starting point and it can be amended later when we are fully acquainted with the conditions that then exist. I think we might accept it with the few amendments that have been made by the sponsor of the Bill in this Chamber and give it a trial. We should also give the sponsor of the Bill in another place a fair go. He has tried to do a lot for aviation in this State.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We might agree to be tolerant about a Bill of this sort; but we cannot be tolerant with a Bill that gives consideration to people coming to the State, but yet makes provision, during the period of 30 minutes before the arrival of the plane, for any person who visits the airport. If that latter provision is struck out of the Bill I will give my support to the measure.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If members will read Subparagraph (i) appearing on page 3 of the Bill they will note that it reads—

To any passenger who has alighted from or who intends to board the aircraft.

Those are the important words. If Dr. Hislop's suggestion is accepted the licence will be restricted to serve only those arriving in the State. However, it is intended that the licensed premises shall be open for 30 minutes before the departure of any aircraft so that they may cater for those people who are departing from the State by plane. If Dr. Hislop decided to go to London next week by plane he might like to have a drink before his departure, and this provision would enable him to do so.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am thankful for that explanation. But why should we consider only those people who are leaving the State or those who are arriving? It seems that the Qantas Company should build a club to cater for its passengers. However, to provide licensed premises at the Perth Airport for the convenience of overseas passengers or for those arriving from the Eastern States and yet forbid those facilities to the people who travel within the State would never be satisfactory to me.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Perth Airport has been in existence for many years; and when a new proposal such as this is put forward, some people want to take advantage of it to introduce a completely new idea. The Bill is designed to cater for a specific type of visitor to the State. Apparently nowhere in Australia has an airport a liquor licence, but in other parts of the world airports do have such a licence. The sponsor of the Bill has considered that it is a sound proposal to allow air passengers arriving in Western Australia, at any rate, the opportunity of obtaining a drink.

The Minister for the North-West: They can get one on the plane.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The sponsor of the Bill has provided that a licence be granted at some specific place. His idea is original. I suppose he has gone to a good deal of trouble in drafting his measure, and no doubt there is intrinsic merit in it. After travelling by plane some people feel sick and others feel tired. There are others who are in the habit of taking liquor before or after an air journey, and they should be entitled to obtain it.

However, if this idea is accepted, I envisage that some adequate premises at the Perth Airport will have to be provided for people who arrive from Wyndham, Kalgoorlie, Esperance and other parts of the State. That is something that might be achieved in the future, and I think we might accept this proposal at present to see how it works out. In fairness to the sponsor of the Bill, we should accept it as it stands.

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

Ayes	.....	18
Noes	.....	5
Majority for	.....	13

Ayes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. Cunningham

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. G. Hislop	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments and the reports adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 4).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day 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.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 54 amended:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Bill deals with wayside houses. There is a punctuation mark required. I suggest that the Clerk be instructed to make the necessary insertion. After the word "Act" in line 7, page 2, a comma is required, and this is an intimation from the Crown Law Department. If the Committee is agreeable, the Clerk can make the alteration.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS
ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [12.55 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: The amendments proposed in this Bill deal with four separate sections of the principal Act. Section 39 of the Act sets a sum of £2,000

as the limit of liability for personal injuries which shall be recoverable in any action against the commission.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that this amount has remained unaltered for over 50 years and is entirely inadequate, having regard to the considerable decline in monetary value today as compared with 50 years ago. The amendment proposes to increase this maximum liability to £6,000 where the cause of action arose on or after the coming into operation of the Bill.

The present terms for leases, as provided in section 63 of the Act, set a limit of 21 years. The Railways Commission considers that a leasing period of 21 years is adequate but agrees that in special cases this should be extended to 50 years. Such a special case has arisen in a request received from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a longer lease term for the erection of a new grain silo.

This company has decided to experiment with a set of vertical concrete grain silos at Trayning siding which will enable the faster loading of railway wagons, the more efficient control of weevils, and the easier handling of more than one grain. The life of this type of silo is estimated to be at least 100 years, and it could be the forerunner of others to be erected as required at different sidings.

Before commencing the erection of this more expensive type of silo at Trayning, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is anxious to secure a longer lease than the existing 21 years. The amendment provides that any leases beyond 21 years, up to the maximum of 50 years, shall be granted only on the written authorisation of the Minister.

The next amendment is submitted at the request of the Railways Commission which has for some time expressed doubt as to the legal right of the commission to delegate its powers or authority to servants of the commission. It has been the practice for more than 50 years to delegate powers or authorities by various methods such as letter of authority, minutes of instruction, expenditure authority forms, etc.

In respect of the powers under present Section 73 of the Act to appoint, suspend, dismiss, fine or reduce in grade officers or servants of the department, it has been the practice to restrict the delegation to heads of branches, also subject to a fortnightly return to be submitted to the commission for ratification or any other action considered necessary. Although the delegation of powers to dismiss appeared to be authorised under Section 77, Subsection (3), of the Act, doubt has been expressed regarding the other provisions of Section 73—that is to appoint, suspend, fine or reduce in grade—and the commission has requested that the Act be amended

to clarify the position and to ensure that it has the legal right to delegate such of its powers or authority as may be considered necessary to carry out the functions prescribed in the Act.

Crown Law Department officers are of the opinion that a reasonable doubt exists as to whether the commission has power to delegate to subordinates authority to punish employees otherwise than by dismissal, and consider it would be safer to clarify the position by this amendment. It might also be mentioned that the Commonwealth Railways Act confers an express power upon the Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways to delegate to any employee any of the commissioner's powers under the Act. The relevant railways Acts of several other States also confer an express power upon heads of branches to dismiss, suspend, fine or reduce.

The last amendment concerns Section 77 of the Act, which deals with the rights of employees to appeal against punishment. As the Act stands at present this right of appeal applies only to permanent employees, and it is defined in Section 77 that no person shall be deemed to be "permanently employed" within the meaning of this section unless he has been continuously employed for one year.

This then means that any employee with less than the prescribed service has no right of appeal against punishment, regardless of any doubts that there may be or any mitigating factors which have not been given full consideration. It is conceivable that an employee could be victimised by being dismissed from the service for some minor breach of the regulations or some trivial misdemeanour and would have no right of appeal against such undue punishment.

It might be thought that the granting of this right would induce many employees with less than 12 months' service to appeal against punishment without any reason or chance of success. However, Section 83 of the Railways Act provides that where the grounds of appeal are considered frivolous, costs shall be awarded against the appellant, and this should be sufficient deterrent to prevent any employee appealing if he did not have a case with sufficient grounds to expect a favourable decision from the Appeal Board. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [12.59]: The Chief Secretary supplied me with his notes, and I was able to compare the clauses in the Bill with the sections in the Act which are affected. In the main, this is a machinery Bill to clear up certain points which have arisen in administration. I commend it to members because in particular it gives discretionary powers in regard to lease

tenures in certain circumstances for a longer period than the 21 years now permitted.

I understand that in this case it is concerned with a proposal to grant a lease for a wheat silo for a period of 50 years. During my term as Minister, there was an occasion when the C.W.A. of Geraldton wanted the use of a block of railway land, which was made available, on which to erect a fairly substantial building; and the question arose as to whether a lease of longer than 21 years could be obtained. Under the Act, that was impossible.

However, on my suggestion, the commission was good enough to give an undertaking that the association could rest assured that at the expiration of the period there would be no trouble in getting a renewal, and the bank, in consideration of this undertaking, granted some help towards the erection of the building.

There is only one matter in this Bill regarding which I am not quite satisfied, and I would be glad if the Chief Secretary would hold over the Committee stage until tomorrow. An amendment is proposed to Section 77 of the Act to give employees with less than 12 months' service the same rights of appeal as have hitherto been reserved to those who have had 12 months' service or more.

The view of the commission was, and I think still is, that up to a period of 12 months an employee was on probation. He was really regarded as a casual employee. The position may have been altered, as the Railway Department is continually having trouble in obtaining the requisite staff. I am prepared to recommend the acceptance of this Bill, with the reservation that the Committee stage be postponed so that the necessary inquiries may be made and this provision examined more closely.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [12 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has become necessary because of the redistribution of electoral boundaries. Under the parent Act, the amount of expenses to be reimbursed to members of Parliament is clearly set out in respect of each particular section of the State. The parent Act is so worded as to provide that the payment for electorates in the metropolitan area shall be on the basis of £200 per member. The Act then goes on to state that an additional amount of reimbursement of expenses shall be paid in respect of all other

districts in the State, with the exception of the North-West, for which a different amount is provided.

Under the recent redistribution of boundaries in the metropolitan area, a district has been created which has been given a completely new name, and consequently this name of Beeloo is not included in the parent Act as one of the districts in the metropolitan area. If the Act were not amended to include the new district, the member for Beeloo would be able to claim the amount of reimbursement of expenses that applies to agricultural districts, which, of course, is higher than that claimable in respect of a metropolitan electorate.

The Bill does not place in the principal Act the name of Beeloo as a metropolitan electorate. It proposes to give the Governor-in-Council power to include this district as a metropolitan electorate, and the Bill, as worded, will allow the Governor to take similar action at any time in the future when such action is required. This will obviate the need for the parent Act being amended every time a redistribution of boundaries that provides for a new electorate takes place.

By doing it this way, we amend the Act this once and it would not become necessary to amend it again in the future. The Governor would take the appropriate action when required and thus obviate the necessity of bringing the matter to Parliament every time a new name was given to a metropolitan electorate.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is that all the Bill contains?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [1.8 a.m.]: There seems to be little to object to in this Bill, the purpose of which is to enable the board of the Royal Perth Hospital to finalise an arrangement for

the purchase of the Grand Hotel as residential quarters for the nursing staff. It is too late in the session to go into the whole story of our hospitals and nurses' accommodation, but this does bring to the notice of members the parlous condition into which we are getting with regard to the maintenance of our hospitals.

We find that a hospital has to purchase a building previously used as a hotel and transform it for use as nurses' quarters. In order to do so, it has been necessary to approach Parliament and ask to be given the right, with the consent of the Governor, to sell, lease or exchange any land vested in it, and to pay or receive money by way of equality of exchange.

The whole situation of our hospitals today is one that should cause the Government and, in fact, every citizen considerable concern. To build a nurses' home to house the whole of the staff of the Royal Perth Hospital would call for the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. There are something like 600 nurses on the staff of the Royal Perth Hospital, and nurses cannot be housed in multi-storied buildings at a cheap rate. I should say that in order to house those 600 nurses, the cost would run into a million or more.

At the same time, our hospitals are in need of extension. There are hospitals all over the State which are badly in need either of repair or modernisation, and the amount of money that would be required to put the whole of our hospitals into shape would be very great indeed.

I was astonished a night or two ago when the Loan Bill was being considered to learn that no money has been set aside this year for extensions to the King Edward Memorial Hospital. Something must be done in the immediate future at that hospital because, unless some very considerable extensions are made in order to complete it as a women's hospital and provide for obstetric and gynaecological work as well, it will be totally inadequate to meet the demands made upon it. I understand that the board of the King Edward Memorial Hospital has been promised sums of money from time to time which, in the opinion of the board, have been totally inadequate and which in the main have never eventuated.

So things go from bad to worse as the State and particularly the metropolitan area expands. Only last week, I received a communication from the Fremantle hospital, stating that it was urgent that something be done to supply at least 50 additional beds. We shall find ourselves in very serious difficulties if we allow this state of affairs to continue.

I believe that a good deal of our trouble could have been overcome if we had not been so obstinate about the appointment of a hospital commission. There seems to be only one solution to this problem and

that is to have a commission with authority to borrow and mortgage and raise funds as necessary. If such a commission had been in vogue, I am certain that the Royal Perth Hospital would have found itself today in a very much better position in regard to its financial commitments and for the housing of the nurses.

Furthermore, if we had had a hospital commission when that hospital was first commenced, or even when the buildings were concentrated, I doubt whether it would have cost £4,000,000. I believe that a lot of money has been squandered in building that hospital, largely because we have not had any real organisation of the hospitals within the State. I see the need for the Bill, but we are getting ourselves further and further into difficulties by adopting such piecemeal methods. The time is not far distant when somebody will need to have enough courage to think on a grander scale than this Bill contemplates. I support the second reading.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [1.15 a.m.]: I agree with all Dr. Hislop's remarks. The position of hospitalisation in the Fremantle area has become extremely serious. The doctors in charge of the Fremantle hospital have, over the last 15 months, made available to local members of Parliament several schedules showing their position. No doubt other members have received the communication referred to by Dr. Hislop. I would remind the House that many patients at the Fremantle hospital are there owing to accidents in the shipping services and we often read in the Press of crew members being injured.

The urgency of the matter can be illustrated by quoting the average stay, in days, of patients in the Royal Perth Hospital and the Fremantle hospital. For the year 1952-53 the average stay in days per patient in the Royal Perth Hospital was 17.21 days and in the Fremantle hospital 12.15 days. In 1953-54 it was Royal Perth Hospital 16.95 days and Fremantle 10.68 days. In 1954-55 the figure was Royal Perth Hospital 18.05 days and Fremantle hospital 10.27 days which means, in effect, that the period spent by patients in the Fremantle institution was approximately half that spent by those in the Royal Perth Hospital.

The question by Mr. Davies about the Hilton Park area and the ground to be made available to the Fremantle hospital was not asked to find out what was happening but how quickly we could get built on that ground the 50-bed hospital required for the Fremantle district. I read in the Press last Saturday that the hospital committee has decided that rather than continue and build a hospital at Kwinana, the immediate requirement of the 50-bed hospital at Hilton Park is more urgent. I am not parochial enough to think that Fremantle is the only area requiring further hospital facilities, but the position there is extremely serious.

I feel that a great many responsible persons are unaware of the danger arising from the overcrowding of our hospitals. I know the position at the K.E.M.H. and that lately, for practically the whole of the time, it is 65 or 75 per cent. overcrowded. I do not know where we are to get the funds from, and I think that the suggestion made by Dr. Hislop over a long period, with regard to a hospitals commission, should be given serious consideration.

This measure refers to the purchasing of the Grand Hotel in Wellington-st. It is all very well to take over a building to provide a home for nurses, but we must also consider accommodation for visitors, and here I refer to country visitors down on urgent business. If accommodation in this many-roomed building is to be denied to those people, it will make conditions much harder for them. Instead of buying up existing buildings, I think other arrangements will have to be made. I cannot offer any solution of the problem but am keen to see something done about hospitalisation on a State-wide basis. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—ALBANY HARBOUR BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [1.25 a.m.]: I support the Bill, and I inform members that the remuneration rates were fixed in 1926, and no alteration has been made since, so they will appreciate that it is time a revision was made. We will be well advised to do as the Bill provides and allow the board to fix the remuneration by regulation. The board, during its lifetime, has acted capably. It has paid the interest on the capital invested, and £7,000 towards the sinking fund. It has also handled the trade at the port in a most efficient manner and to the satisfaction of all concerned. Mr. Baesjou, who recently replaced Mr. D. K. House on the board, has to travel 100 miles whenever it is necessary for him to attend a meeting. His remuneration of £1 17s. 6d., for being at such an important meeting, is not sufficient.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He would get a mileage rate now.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Not at the present time.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Was that not provided for under an amending Act some time ago.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No. I inquired about that, but such is not the case. On numerous other occasions apart from board meetings, these members meet to carry out the business of the board and develop the port of Albany. Members, no doubt, will accept what the Minister has said; and what I have had to say is, I am sure, of interest to the House. The chairman of the board, Mr. Bolt, is also a member of the Australian Port Authority. He has had occasion to leave the State many times, and when he is away he acts in the interests of the port of Albany.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. today.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.30 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 24th November, 1955.

FIRST PERIOD.

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

QUESTIONS.

WEST AUSTRALIAN STEEL PRODUCTS, LTD.

Liability and Security.

Hon. L. THORN asked the Treasurer:

(1) What is the nature of the Government and the Rural & Industries Bank interest in, and actual or contingent liability in respect of West Australian Steel Products, Ltd.