

might be in the near future—they would be found to be in favour of road transport on the score of pounds, shillings and pence alone.

So if we have regard for all the facts of the situation and be less impressed with flights of fancy as to what might happen, our duty to the State is clear and that is that we must vote in favour of this resolution which will be implemented in stages as rapidly as possible, but only when the Government is assured that adequate and sufficient road transport is provided for those using our roads and also that reasonable attention will be given to the roads to ensure that the operation of those services becomes a practical proposition.

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

Ayes	25
Noes	6
Majority for	19

#### Ayes.

Mr. Court	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. I. Manning
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Norton
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Owen
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Watts
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Cornell

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Perkins
Mr. O'Brien	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Hall	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. May	Mr. Grayden

Question thus passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

*House adjourned at 2.24 a.m. (Friday).*

## Legislative Council

Friday, 14th December, 1956.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION.

#### EDUCATION.

##### Wyndham State School.

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) As the Government is now spending a negligible amount by way of maintenance on the State School at Wyndham, and in view of its known age and present deplorable dilapidated condition, will he advise whether the proposed urgently needed new school is to be commenced forthwith?

(2) If not, when is a commencement date proposed?

(3) If a new structure cannot be completed in time for the new school year, will the urgent repairs so necessary to make the existing structure habitable be carried out forthwith?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The department has no immediate plans for a new school building at Wyndham.

(2) The erection of a new three-roomed school and of quarters for a married man are proposed when the new townsite develops.

(3) Any necessary maintenance is carried out on the school.

### BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Report etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

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

**BILL—PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE  
PERMANENT RESERVE (A<sup>1</sup>1162).**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [2.35] in moving the second reading said: Most members will probably recollect that about five years ago some buildings were in the course of erection on the reserve mentioned in this Bill and that the House Committee of Parliament objected to their erection. As a result, the then Minister for Works introduced a Bill asking for authority for the continuance and completion of the construction of the buildings. Originally the Minister sought authority to cover a period of 21 years, but the period was amended in this House to 10 years. Another place would not agree to 10 years and the Bill was ultimately passed with provision for five years only.

The situation with regard to the erection of buildings to house employees of the Public Works Department is even more difficult than it was five years ago, and the stage has not yet been reached where it is possible to put up the permanent buildings which the department requires. The power to have these buildings on the reserve expired on the 20th of last month. It is not possible to get over the difficulty by a continuance Bill, because the period between the 20th November and the time when this Bill will pass has to be covered.

The Crown Law Department has advised that it is necessary to have an entirely new Bill if these buildings are to be allowed to remain on this reserve. Members will agree that it would be impracticable to shift these buildings immediately as accommodation for the staff is simply not available.

Under the circumstances, the sole alternative is for Parliament to agree to the buildings remaining for a further period. Members will note that a lengthy period is not stipulated in the Bill. It is limited to three years as it is hoped that at the end of that time the position with regard to the location of public buildings should be clarified and it should be possible to make a start with the necessary accommodation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. F. R. H. LAVERY** (West) [2.37]: I support the Bill. I have a suggestion to make but I do not know whether effect could be given to it. For many years it has been suggested that additions should be made to Parliament House, and I am wondering whether the Public Works Department should not pay rent to the House Committee for the use of this land, the money to be employed for extensions to our building.

**HON. A. R. JONES** (Midland) [2.39]: Being one of those who strongly criticised and opposed the erection of the £75,000 temporary building on this site about five years ago, I desire to express the view that the term of three years specified in this Bill is too long. The McLarty-Watts Government erected these buildings against the wishes, I am sure, of the majority of members. If a sufficient number had only had the courage of their convictions at that time those buildings would not have been erected. For reasons of expediency, however, they were established there; and I consider they are a blot on our good judgment particularly when, at the time, there was land available between Government House and the Christian Brothers' College on which those buildings could have been established.

I consider that the erection of the buildings here was a sheer waste of money and an example of bad administration. No less a sum than £75,000 was spent on allegedly temporary buildings with which it seems we will be saddled for many years. I consider that with a view to indicating to the Government that we desire a quick decision to be made as to the location of these buildings, we should limit to two years the period for which they can remain on this site.

**HON. E. M. DAVIES** (West) [2.40]: I, like Mr. Jones, was present in this House when this question was discussed five years ago, and I remember the negotiations with the then Government about its intention to utilise portion of the Parliament House reserve for the erection of departmental buildings. At that time the House Committee objected, and eventually a Bill was brought down to allow the buildings, which were already almost completed, to remain for a period of five years.

My attitude on that occasion was that as the Government had already erected a major portion of the buildings no good purpose could be served by not granting it a reasonable period in which to seek an alternative site. As the Chief Secretary said, 10 years was one period that was mentioned.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There was a suggestion of 21 years.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If I had my way the buildings would remain for 21 years, because it will be a long time before any Government will be justified in spending money on new buildings, and the structures at present on this reserve will be serviceable for a long time to come. It must be remembered that there are a number of other buildings also on this Class "A" reserve; and until such time as all the Government offices can be centralised and money made available for that purpose, I see no harm in these structures remaining. Members will all agree that this Class "A" reserve is for Parliament House purposes, but the fact is that the

grounds surrounding Parliament House are kept in good condition and improve the locality from an aesthetic point of view. The reserve belongs to the people and they have the right to pass through it if they so desire.

When the controversy took place five years ago I think that some people were speaking with their tongues in their cheeks, because not long before that measure was before the House a number of members voted to give portion of the Stirling reserve to the Perth City Council as a site for a new town hall. That is a Class "A" reserve which belongs to the people and not to the Perth City Council; and I, for one, felt that if those who raised so much objection to part of the Parliament House reserve being used for Public Works Department purposes could support a move to alienate portion of the Stirling reserve and hand it to the Perth City Council, they were not being consistent. I am only sorry that the Government of the day did not secure a longer period in which the buildings on this Class "A" reserve could remain.

Any money that may become available in the next few years can be spent to much greater advantage in other directions than in scrapping the buildings at present on this reserve and erecting new ones elsewhere. When it is eventually possible to have all Government departments centralised in one building, that will be a great convenience to members of Parliament and the public generally; but that day is still in the distant future. I support the Bill.

**HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM** (Central [2.45]: I would point out that the first encroachment on this reserve by public buildings was when the Education Department erected a structure at the corner of Hay-st. and what is now known as Parliament Place, and no objection was raised at that time. Subsequently, in the early part of the Labour Government's regime from 1924 onwards, the present Metropolitan Water Supply Department buildings were constructed; and again no objection was taken. But when the further building was commenced about five years ago the House Committee feared that there might be considerable further encroachment on the reserve.

The site of that building is portion of the approach to what will eventually be the front of Parliament House, and we thought that the presence of that structure might be used as an excuse for not eventually completing Parliament House. Over the years, the work of parliamentarians has become much more strenuous, and the staff of Parliament has increased; and we felt that we did not wish to give any Government an excuse for failing, should it be possible, to complete Parliament House.

As an appreciation of the present Government's proposal to complete this building, I think we might agree to the Bill; and, at all events, we cannot ask the Government to move the temporary buildings at this juncture. I support the second reading.

**HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East [2.47]: I fear that the buildings in question will be a Kathleen Mavourneen as it would be an absolute waste of public money if legislation were passed making it mandatory that the present structures be moved. When the House Committee first dealt with this question some years ago it opposed, by resolution, the erection of the most recent buildings on the Parliament House reserve, as that site is part of the approach to what will in time be the front of Parliament House; and it was felt that the building, when Parliament House was completed, would be nothing but an eyesore.

As members know, if Parliament House is ever completed, what is now the rear of the building will ultimately become the front. When the House Committee passed the resolution to which I have referred, there was considerable controversy; but I stuck to my guns and voted against the third reading of the Bill that was introduced. I realise, of course, that these temporary buildings will remain where they are for no one knows how long as, under the present circumstances, it would be a waste of public money if the Government moved them.

However, I know the criticism that was levelled at the time against the decision of the House Committee to dispose of it. Then the party whips got cracking and several members of the House Committee had to reverse their decision with reluctance and allow this last Government structure to be erected on this site. I oppose the Bill.

**HON. C. H. SIMPSON** (Midland [2.51]: I happened to be Leader in this House when the Bill to validate the building of the premises in question was brought forward. That building, of course, was to be erected as an addition to those already existing on the Parliament House Class "A" reserve site. It will be recalled that the motion was carried and then rescinded. Then, on a second attempt, the Bill itself was carried, and the action or desire of the Government was validated. I think that was the first occasion on which anything of that nature had occurred.

If members have seen the complete plan for the whole of Parliament House—which hangs in the corridor at the southern end of this building—they will realise what the architect had in mind. There is no doubt that it was intended that the whole area should be cleared of any structures except Parliament House itself, so that if one were looking up the Terrace towards the west

one would view Parliament House in the same way as one can look up Bourke-st., Melbourne, and see the pillars of Parliament House in the distance on a fine structure set on an elevated piece of ground which, no doubt, presents an excellent view.

How this proposal will fit into the town-planning scheme, I do not know. Some people have put forward the suggestion that the old Barracks should be pulled down. There is no doubt that the architect who originally planned this building envisaged that that building or any others which are standing on this site should be pulled down. As a matter of commonsense, I think that the extension of the period for three years must be accepted. At the time of the building of this structure materials were very short and apparently it was desired to erect this building close to the Public Works Department so that the officers who worked in it would be under the eye of the Commissioner of Main Roads or the Director of Works, and so that there could be a closer liaison than would be the case if the officers were housed in another building some distance away.

I think the idea in mind then was that possibly, in 15 or 20 years' time, there might be a co-ordinated scheme of public buildings sited, if possible, on the one area and built on the same lines as the Government buildings have been erected in North Terrace, Adelaide. In any event, this House must agree, I think, that the lease should be extended so that these buildings may have a further life on the reserve belonging to Parliament House.

**HON. F. J. S. WISE (North)** [2.54]: I support the Bill for several reasons, the principal one being that we have not much alternative. As the one who moved for the appointment of a select committee many years ago to inquire into the best possible sites for public buildings, and as the chairman of the committee that presented the report, I have a little knowledge of the background in regard to all the alternatives that were then and are now offering as suitable sites for the erection of Government buildings.

At that time, 27 sites were offering; and it will be recalled that the area which was part of the Government domain was the site that was finally selected for the erection of Government buildings in the future. A very large piece of ground has been reserved there in a most suitable position, having regard to transport problems in the future. However, expedients always present difficulties, particularly when it is realised that temporary structures generally become permanently temporary and remain in constant use for a generation as a rule.

Although I hope that this site, at any time in the future will not be further encroached upon, I do not think we have

any alternative but to agree to this Bill. Further, we should not be unduly restrictive when we pass it, because the period of the lease which shall obtain should be one that will be suitable and convenient whilst these buildings are erected on this site.

**HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan)** [2.57]: All of us should learn from this, if we fail to learn in similar circumstances on other occasions, that a temporary building does not exist in a development that is considered essential. At the time I opposed the establishment of this structure I also opposed the selection of a new site for the town hall. We should be realistic in considering this matter and appreciate that we are just beating against the wind if we decide that this question shall be discussed again in three years.

If we do, it will be merely adding to the debates of Parliament and nothing else; because even after the expiration of three years, we will still have no alternative—as we have none now—but to agree to the extension of the term which applies to the use of the land comprising Parliament House site. The State is fighting an unequal struggle with the Commonwealth in regard to the erection of Government buildings; because if the Commonwealth Government decides that another building is required for its purposes, or for the national commitments, it is not very long before a sum of money is set aside for that purpose, and it is not long after that before a start is made on the new building.

As far as the State is concerned, however, it will be many years before we can look forward to the erection of a substantial block of buildings where all our Government officers can be housed. It seems to me that, in this connection, the balance between the Commonwealth and the State is so unbalanced—if I can put it that way—that again the necessity presents itself to have some readjustment of Commonwealth-State finances and for a completely new outlook to be adopted in connection with Commonwealth-State functions. Although I do not wish to prolong the debate, it is my intention, in the Committee stage, to attempt to give this Bill a longer life.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply)** [2.58]: In replying to the debate, my main purpose is to try to get Mr. Hall to change his attitude in regard to this matter. Like him and other speakers this afternoon, I was one of the rebels who voiced my objections when this building was first mooted. In fact, I think it was the amendment which I moved, and which was carried by this House, that limited the period of the lease. I just cannot remember whether

it was that amendment or one that had been moved in the Assembly that was finally agreed upon.

Like other members, I did protest against the encroachment at the time. When we were told that the temporary building was being erected, I said that temporary buildings were like temporary taxes; they were never pulled down and they went on. I would like Mr. Hall to reconsider his attitude about being consistent. It is very nice to be consistent; but one can be consistent to too great an extent, and so become awkward. I am sure the hon. member is big enough to change his mind, when he knows the real purpose of the proposition. If other members were to take the same stand as he, they would compel the Government to break the laws of the State by remaining on that land.

Hon. L. C. Diver: In other words, the vote in this House will make no difference to the position?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The circumstances will be the same and no difference will be made. The term has already expired.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Surely you would not remain in any Government that broke the law?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are times when the Government is compelled to break the law. As I said, the term has already expired and there is no possibility whatever of shifting the public servants in that temporary building to other accommodation. That cannot be done except by wasting money on new accommodation which would be better expended on schools and hospitals. I wish to say that although one should be consistent, it is pleasant to be inconsistent at times, so that one can say afterwards, "I was not a donkey. I did not stick to what I said years ago. I am big enough to change my mind."

Might I say to those who mentioned an amendment of the term, that I would not like to see that done—and for a very good reason. Under the regional plan, within the next 12 months the Government hopes that the details will be worked out. That plan sets out where the public buildings ought to be situated. When the details are worked out, a firm decision will be made.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Where will the public buildings be erected?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Where Hale School is now situated. When the details of the plan are worked out, a decision will have to be made as to whether the public buildings are to be erected on that site. Three years will be sufficient to enable the details to be worked out, and a decision to be made, although at the end of that time the new buildings will not be completed. If three years are

agreed to, then, when the next continuance Bill is before us, the Government will be able to tell us exactly how much longer the temporary building will be required. We will then be able to decide on a definite period within which the temporary building should be pulled down, and the Government will be expected to do something about the matter.

I would not like to see the term amended to 20 years or to one year, because one year is too short and 20 years too long a period. With a period of 20 years, the Government might be lulled into a false sense of security in not having to worry about removing the structure before the expiration of that time. I hope the Bill will go through without amendment. I do not like the measure any better than do other members, but I am always prepared to face up to the facts. The position is that some extension must be granted, and I say that less than three years is too short and over three years is too long a period.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Modification of purpose of dedication:

Hon. A. R. JONES: I take this opportunity to say a few words in reply to the Chief Secretary. I said that I hoped the period would be less than three years; but at the same time, I realised that one year would be too short. I consider that two years is an ample period. Since this measure was introduced about five years ago, 10 new members have been elected to this Chamber and they know nothing of what occurred previously. I suppose the same will happen in the future. As new members come they should be kept up to date about this matter, and for that reason I think two years should be the period.

I am firm in my attitude in regard to this measure, because I consider that it was one of the worst steps taken by the Government when it commenced a temporary structure on Parliament House reserve before approaching Parliament to obtain permission. I shall not forgive the Government for taking that step and for adopting a standover attitude afterwards. I register my protest on the matter.

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

That the word "three" in line 13, page 2, be struck out and the word "ten" inserted in lieu.

It appears that the only development that will disturb the temporary structure referred to is the building of the access road to the Narrows bridge. We have

heard a statement from the responsible Minister that that road will not be constructed within 10 years, so we know that the temporary building will remain as it is for at least 10 years. For that reason I have moved the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment. I am surprised to hear the statement that the Minister is reported to have said that the access road will not be built within 10 years. The access road is an important feature of the Narrows bridge project. Tenders for the bridge have already closed. The bridge will not be of much use without the access road. I do not know anything about the 10 years mentioned by Dr. Hislop, but I shall check up on that.

I prefer the shorter term of three years because the Government will be reminded every three years that some definite decision will have to be made. It is well known that if there is any expenditure which can be put off, Governments always put it off. I would point out that a lot of development will take place in the next three years, and for that reason a period of three years is sufficient time to elapse before a review of the measure is undertaken.

Amendment put and 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*.

## **RESOLUTION—RAILWAYS.**

### *Discontinuance of Certain Lines.*

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—

That in the opinion of this House, having regard particularly to the considerations referred to in Appendix "A" to this motion, the services provided by the railways listed in Appendix "B" to this motion should notwithstanding certain other considerations, be discontinued and that such railways should cease to be operated, subject to the Government—

- (a) ensuring that through increased efficiency and economies throughout the W.A.G.R., including workshops and administration, a substantial reduction in the railway deficit will be achieved as a result of the cessation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (b) ensuring an adequate replacement system of passenger and freight transport before cessation of operation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and

- (c) overhauling and reorganising the metropolitan Government passenger transport services with a view to reducing substantially the deficits in such services.

### **Appendix "A."**

(1) The annual cash deficits of the State railways.

(2) The condition of State railways generally and particularly of the railways listed in Appendix "B".

(3) The need for improvements in the economical operation of the State railways, and for the concentration of railway resources to permit of all-round improvements in the cost of operating the railways.

(4) The facts that the railways listed in Appendix "B" are unprofitable and that their rehabilitation and operation would involve heavy expenditure when compared with existing and anticipated future traffic on those railways.

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

(6) The need to avoid, to every possible extent, any necessity to increase rail freights on the remaining railways, and to provide for the adequate rehabilitation and operation of the remaining railways.

(7) The recovery of materials for use on other railways.

(8) The availability and use of other means of transport.

(9) The most satisfactory and economical employment of staff.

### **Appendix "B."**

#### **Railways.**

**Length of  
Railways.  
Miles.**

Meekatharra to Wiluna	111
Cue to Big Bell	19
Malcolm to Laverton	64
Geraldton to Ajana	67
Wokarina to Yuna	38
Burakin to Bonnie Rock	76
Mukinbudin to Lake Brown	8
Lake Brown to Bullfinch	50
Bullfinch to Southern Cross	22
Boddington to Narrogin	51
Busselton to Margaret River	38
Margaret River to Flinders Bay	29
Elleker to Nornalup	61
Brookton to Corrigin	56
Lake Grace to Hyden	58
Katanning to Pingrup	59
Gnowangerup to Ongerup	35

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**BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE.***Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [3.20] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, the Public Service Act of 1904-55, and to amend three related Acts so as to place administration of the public service under the control of a board of three instead of a single commissioner. The Bill seeks to recast and regroup certain sections of the existing Public Service Act in order to delete inoperative provisions and remove anomalies and ambiguities. In addition, a greater measure of administrative flexibility has been provided for the board than that possessed by the commissioner at present.

Public service boards already operate in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, and the Civil Service Association in Western Australia has requested the Government to introduce a similar system of administration in this State. After agreeing in principle, the Government sought information from the three States mentioned and had a close examination made of their legislation. Certain of the methods followed in other States have been adopted and some have been modified to suit Western Australian conditions.

It is believed that by the appointment of a board of three members, it will be possible for those in charge of the public service to give more time to personal inspection and personal investigation of conditions in the various departments, thus ensuring the greatest possible degree of efficiency.

The Bill provides for a board of three members of which the chairman and one member would be appointed by the Governor in Council. The third member would be appointed by the Civil Service Association after a secret ballot among its members. Thus the Bill will give effect to the important principle of employee representation in administration. It is proposed that the tenure of office be seven years for the chairman and five years for the members and their salaries would be determined by Executive Council.

In certain respects the Bill proposes more authority for the board than is possessed by the commissioner at present. Whereas the commissioner has only recommendatory power in respect of appointments, promotions, transfers and retirements, the board is to be given authority to effect these matters up to a salary of £1,957 per annum, once all rights of appeal have been exercised. It is also proposed to give the board additional power to create and abolish positions up to the same salary level. The effect of this will be to reduce considerably the amount of detailed work going to Ministers and Executive Council.

It is proposed to give the public service board authority to hear all appeals in the first instance in respect of classification, promotion and punishment. Provisions similar to those at present prescribed in the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act and the Public Service Appeal Board Act, have been written into the Bill. There will, however, still be a right of appeal to the Public Service Appeal Board, in the following instances:—

- (a) where, following a general re-classification the decision of the public service board in respect of an appeal is not unanimous;
- (b) where, in respect of punishment, the penalty imposed is dismissal, a fine of £25 or more, or a reduction of more than one grade;
- (c) where, in respect of promotion, the decision of the public service board is not unanimous;
- (d) where, in respect of incapacity or unfitness, an officer is directed to retire or accept a transfer to another office. (This right of appeal does not exist at all at present.)

For the purpose of hearing these appeals, the Public Service Appeal Board shall consist of a Supreme Court judge as chairman and a representative each of the Government and the Civil Service Association.

With regard to appeals in respect of promotion, it is proposed to extend the right of appeal to all officers except those in the administrative division and those in the professional division which have a maximum salary in excess of £2,357 per annum. Provision is made for the Government to add to or subtract from this list of appealable positions after consultation with the Civil Service Association. At present a right of appeal lies only in respect of promotion—in all divisions—to positions which have a maximum salary below £1,958 per annum. All rights of appeal will lie only in respect of officers who are members of the Civil Service Association. At present this stipulation does not apply to appeals in respect of classification or punishment, but only to promotion appeals.

The Bill also proposes several minor amendments to existing administrative practices with a view to making management of the service more flexible. The more important of these are as follows:—

- (a) Decisions regarding the need for temporary assistance in departments are to be made by the board in lieu of Ministers.
- (b) Statutory authority is to be given to officers to request a review where the board proposes to appoint a person other than an officer to a vacancy. (The right of review exists at present only by virtue of a "gentlemen's" agreement between the commissioner and the association.)

- (c) Parties to an appeal before the public service board are not to be entitled to be represented by an agent or counsel.
- (d) Parties to an appeal before the Public Service Appeal Board are to be entitled to be represented by counsel only in appeals relating to punishment or retirement on the grounds of incapacity or unfitness. In other matters they may only be represented by an agent other than a legal practitioner.
- (e) The taking of annual leave is to be approved by permanent heads in lieu of Ministers and accumulations of annual leave are to be approved by the board in lieu of Ministers.
- (f) Periods of leave without pay not exceeding one month are to be approved by the board in lieu of the Governor.
- (g) Initial grants of sick leave up to a maximum period of two months are to be approved by the board in lieu of the Minister.
- (h) Clarity is to be given to such expressions as "seniority," "equal classification" and "promotion."
- (i) The requirements regarding financial provision for retirement from the public service are to be prescribed by regulation in lieu of being governed by statutory provisions.
- (j) A fifth division, the technical division, is to be introduced to permit of greater refinement between professional, technical and general skills. More exhaustive definitions of the divisions is to be provided also and greater emphasis is being placed on minimum entrance qualifications.
- (k) "Statutory offences," as distinct from "public service offences," are to be defined more explicitly instead of a single reference to "indictable offences"
- (l) Specific regulation making power is to be provided in respect of cadetships to resolve doubt, if any, regarding the validity of the existing provisions in this connection.
- (m) The public service board is to be given express authority to give consideration to improvement in the training of officers.

Because of the powers to be vested in the public service board, it will be necessary to amend the following related Acts:—

Industrial Arbitration Act.

Public Service Appeal Board Act.

Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act.

For convenience, amendments to these Acts are contained in parts to a schedule to the Bill. There is one further small item included in the Bill which has no relation to the proposed public service board. The chairman of the Promotions Appeal Board has drawn attention to the fact that certain State organisations which come under Commonwealth awards have no say in the selection of the union representative on the board. It is therefore proposed to amend the definition of "union" in Section 6 of the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act to include the Australasian Transport Officers' Federation and the Association of Railway Professional Officers of Australia.

In Committee, I propose to ask for certain amendments relating to long service leave, and also to delete the provision in Clause 26 that two deputies can constitute a quorum of the proposed public service board. At least members will not be able to complain, as they have done in regard to other Bills, that Ministers are claiming too much power, because most of the reference here is to taking power away from Ministers and placing it elsewhere. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. L. A. LOGAN** (Midland) [3.28]: I have taken the opportunity to give the Bill some consideration. I find it is a necessary Bill because liquid petroleum gas is something new in Western Australia; and there is no definition of gas in the two measures at present in operation. I was inclined to believe, in the first place, that unnecessary control was being introduced because the distribution of this product has been in operation for some months, and the firms concerned—the Kwinana Refinery, the Commonwealth Oil Refineries and Westralian Farmers—have done a particularly good job in making sure that there were few mistakes in their plans for making the gas available throughout the State.

Although this gas has been used in America for some time, it has not previously been introduced into Australia. The firms concerned with its distribution found that there were many difficulties to overcome in connection with the necessary cylinders, stoves and other equipment, because the gas is entirely different from coal gas, and needs to be handled somewhat differently.

I believe that some criticism has been levelled at Metters or at the monopoly which Wesfarmers seem to have over the



stoves. But members should realise that Wesfarmers imported the first stoves into Western Australia. They took one to Metters and asked that firm whether it could produce stoves of the same type for using liquid gas. Metters said that they could; and having done that, Wesfarmers were quite entitled to ensure that the first 20,000 or so stoves should be made by that firm and delivered to them. That is only fair, and I think any criticism levelled at the monopoly is unfair. I know that Wesfarmers will be only too happy, if some other firm can manufacture the stoves to the specifications required, to accept their products.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Have they a monopoly on it?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They have a monopoly at the moment.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What are they selling it for?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I can give the hon. member the price. It was found necessary in the Bill to stipulate a standard to ensure that the consumers would be safeguarded at all times, and that the quality of the gas supplied would be up to a certain standard. Actually I do not know that there is any need for control, because the firms concerned have done everything the right way. They have made sure that the quality of the gas and of the equipment is good. In the last six months they have spent a considerable sum of money in building up their organisations and plant to enable this gas to be utilised throughout the State—mainly, of course, in the country areas.

The companies received a boost because the Geraldton gas works, which had been operating for some considerable time, had to close down. It was a glorious opportunity for the company to do something about the needs of the people of Geraldton who have been so used to gas. The biggest trouble was that the gas stoves used for ordinary coal gas were unsuitable for liquid gas unless fairly extensive alterations were made, except that the later type of stove sold by Metters does not require such a great deal of alteration, and many of those stoves are today being converted and are working quite satisfactorily.

Metters at present are producing the type built specially for liquid gas at the rate of 70 per week, and this has created quite a pool of employment for workers in Western Australia. One of the bugbears to the company has been the obtaining of cylinders in Australia. Up to date, no firm has been able to produce them and they have to be imported from America. Because of the import restrictions, the company has been hampered in its expansion; and, strangely enough, B.H.P. have been unable to produce the right type of high tensile steel necessary for the cylinder manufacture. However,

they have air-freighted a sample to America within the last week or fortnight. This sample will be made into a cylinder by the manufacturers to see if it will stand up to the necessary requirements for cylinders. If it is satisfactory, Rheems will be able to go into production early next year.

They have spent a considerable sum of money in building up their plant and have purchased a large number of tools to enable them to produce these cylinders. Naturally, the supply of cylinders will, to a large extent, depend on how much gas is used in country areas. As regards the method of distribution, the tanker goes to Kwinana; and every tap, pump—and, in fact, every piece of equipment—on the tanker is tested by Lloyds before the tanker is allowed to go into the yard. So it will be seen that a pretty high standard has to be maintained.

The gas is then taken to a central depot; and the cylinders, which are of two sizes—namely, 25lb. and 100lb.—are filled. The gas is measured by weight. In the field operations the tanker tows a trailer behind it, which carries the cylinders; and it has its own scales. When the tanker gets to the large towns, the trailer is jacked up and levelled according to the spirit levels which are built in to the machine.

A connection is then made from the cylinder to the tanker. The cylinder is weighed before the gas commences to flow and when it reaches the weight of 100lb. plus the weight of the cylinder, the flow of gas is automatically cut off. That ensures that exactly 100lb. of gas is in the cylinder. The cylinder is then taken to the home of the user, and he works with two cylinders at all times; one is in use while the other is in reserve.

The company has stipulated that only qualified plumbers shall be permitted to set up these plants in the home; and to ensure that every plumber knows exactly what he is doing, a set of rules has been printed, and that is his Bible. He has to carry out those instructions rigidly, and everything possible has been done to ensure safety and also that the user gets a good product.

I will admit that in the first place the cost is fairly high, particularly if one has to buy a new stove. The cost of the ordinary Metters stove suitable for liquid gas is about £58; but with freight, etc., by the time a person gets it to Geraldton, the cost is about £60. One has to pay £15 deposit on the two cylinders; but if it is decided not to continue using gas, and the cylinders are returned, that money is refunded. There is a rent of £4 10s. per annum on the two bottles and the cost of the gas is 1s. 3d. per lb. within 150 miles of Perth and 1s. 4d. outside that distance. Also there is the cost of installing the

unit; that is usually about £10. It cost me about £105 complete to have a new gas stove installed in my home.

It is anticipated that for an ordinary family one cylinder will last three months; but it is a little early yet to be able to say whether this is so or not, because it is barely three months since the scheme came into operation. A family of only one or two, not using the stove to any great extent, would probably be able to make a cylinder last for six months.

Experience in America has been that the average home uses 30 to 50 lb. per month; but America has a much colder climate than we have. For an extra £30 a very good hot-water system is attached to the stove, if required, and I assume that American people use this system fairly extensively. Therefore I think that their estimate that a cylinder will last a family approximately three months would be fairly conservative. I think we will find that liquid gas will be cheaper than coal gas and it will be equivalent to the cost of electric power at 3d. a unit. If it cost a person more than 3d. for a unit of electricity, liquid gas would be cheaper.

In the early stages there was trouble with the thermostats which control the heat of the oven. As this is a new type of gas, the makers of the thermostats in America were apparently not familiar with the requirements; and as a result, there was quite a deal of trouble. But the company sent its engineer from America and he was taken around to the stoves where trouble was being experienced, and today that bother has been overcome.

To give members an idea of how the use of this gas has been expanded in other countries, I should like to quote the case of Italy where, in 1951, only 50,000 tons were used; but in 1955, only four years later, some 251,000 tons were used, mostly for domestic purposes. That is in a country where the standard of living is not particularly high; and if the use of the gas can be increased to such an extent in a country like that, it has a big future in Western Australia.

I know from practical experience that farmers who have had these gas stoves installed are appreciative of what, in effect, has been a city amenity. I am thankful that we are able to make use of a by-product from Kwinana and that it is used by the country people of Western Australia. It is the intention of the company to set up a depot in Geraldton and, I understand, one at Kalgoorlie. As the scheme expands it will probably have one in Katanning or Wagin, the idea being to ensure that the users have a reserve of gas in case anything goes wrong.

All in all, the Bill really only covers a definition of the gas and the control of it by the S.E.C., plus one or two other

features; but I thought I would give members some idea of what is going on, because I am probably the only member who has one of these stoves in his home. I thought my experience might be useful. 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.

*Sitting suspended from 3.47 to 4.8 p.m.*

### **BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. C. H. SIMPSON** (Midland) [4.8]: This is only a small Bill and there is no objection to it. Only two questions are involved, one being bus shelters and the other a clearer definition of the powers of the Commissioner of Police as the traffic controller in the metropolitan area. The Bill has no reference to the country.

The lack of bus shelters has been exercising our minds for a long time. I remember, as Minister for Transport, making several proposals to the Perth City Council; and for some reason or other that body did not appear inclined to co-operate. It seems extraordinary to me that there is a tendency on the part of local authorities in big towns to favour the elimination of shelters, verandahs on public buildings and structures of that kind, which do certainly provide shelter for people who are shopping, and—in the case of bus shelters—for people who have to wait in queues before boarding their respective vehicles.

I remember photographs of other places being shown to me, and the streets were bare and contained very few structures of any kind, and certainly none which gave shelter to the people. If we think back to the old method of transport, which was the railways, at each of the stations ample shelter and ample seating space was provided for the convenience of the travelling public; nowadays there is a tendency to eliminate these. However, certain local authorities have erected not only seats, but also shelters for the convenience of people travelling by bus. There have been times in the past when the Perth City Council erected similar shelters; but apparently, for some reason or other, it did not co-operate when the suggestion was made by me.

One suggestion I made to the Perth City Council was that half of the cost would be provided from Main Roads Department funds as I was sure that could be done. I notice that in this Bill, there is no suggestion that the necessary money should be taken from these funds, but that the State is apparently willing to bear the cost of the shelters and wants the authority to erect them and spend the necessary funds.

In any case, whatever form they take they will provide shelter for passengers—particularly women and children—when they are waiting at the various points to board respective vehicles. I am quite prepared to support the second reading of this 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—ROAD CLOSURE.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a formal Bill which is brought down annually for the closure of roads at the request of local authorities, Government departments and private individuals. The closures which are referred to in the Bill are as follows:—

**Closure of a public road at Carnarvon:** An inspection has disclosed that three graves at Carnarvon are located outside the boundaries of the cemetery reserve, and are on portion of a surveyed road. The Carnarvon Municipal Council has requested that the road be closed to enable the land to be included in the adjoining cemetery reserve.

**Closure of portion of Stirling-rd., Claremont:** The Municipality of Claremont has acquired the fee simple of a considerable area of land, including Lake Claremont (formerly known as Butler's Swamp), and proposes to reclaim the area with a view to its beautification and development as a major sports ground. To consolidate the area, it is necessary to close a surveyed road running through the lake from north to south. It is proposed that the land contained in the road be granted in fee simple to the Municipality of Claremont for incorporation with the land already held by the municipality.

**Closure of portion of Ambleside Avenue, Mt. Hawthorn:** The State Housing Commission has acquired a number of lots in a private subdivision of freehold land at Mt. Hawthorn, and desires to re-subdivide the land to provide larger frontages to East-st. To facilitate the subdivision, the

commission desires that portion of a public road known as Ambleside Avenue be closed and that one-half of the contained land be vested in the commission and the other half be vested in the other contiguous owner to give her access to her garage. The City of Perth has no objection to the closure of this portion of Ambleside Avenue.

**Closure of portion of a public road at Leederville:** The City of Perth has requested the closure of portion of a public road at Leederville for consolidation with its adjoining lands for recreation purposes. Alternative access is being provided by the City of Perth to link Britannia-rd. with Beltana-st. The Town Planning Board has no objection to this proposal. When closure is completed, it is intended to set the land apart as a reserve for recreation, and to vest it in the City of Perth.

**Deviation of portion of Esplanade, Rockingham:** The Rockingham Road Board with the consent of the adjoining holder has requested a deviation of portion of a public road at Rockingham known as the Esplanade. The deviation involves the closure of portion of the existing street and the revestment of a small area from the adjoining freehold lot. The land comprising the portion to be closed is to be vested in the owner of the adjoining lot by way of exchange for the portion to be revested in Her Majesty.

**Portion of Outridge Terrace, Kalgoorlie:** Investigation has disclosed that three houses have been erected partly on Outridge Terrace, Kalgoorlie. To give the owners a security of tenure of these houses, it is intended to close the portion of Outridge Terrace now surveyed as Kalgoorlie Lots 3381 to 3383 inclusive, to enable leases to be granted. The Municipality of Kalgoorlie has consented to the closure.

**Closure of University Avenue, Hollywood:** It is intended to close University Avenue for the eventual incorporation in the Medical Centre envisaged in the Stephenson-Hepburn report. Alternative access will be provided by the Government at the appropriate time, and it is proposed that the closure will not become effective until proclaimed by the Governor. Members may have read the Press report on that closure which described its actual purpose. University Avenue runs from Aberdare-rd., Shenton Park, to Monash-rd., Hollywood, and it is proposed to close that portion and open up Winthrop Avenue, which runs along the boundary of King's Park; and traffic will ultimately come out in front of the university instead of at the junction of Broadway and Stirling Highway.

**Closure of portions of Blair-st., Bunbury:** The Bunbury Municipal Council desires to realign Blair-st., Bunbury, and it is necessary to close two portions of this

street. When closure is completed, it is intended to include portion of the land within reserve 22077, set apart for railway purposes, and to sell the portions comprised in locations 4686 to 4689 inclusive to the adjoining holders to preserve their frontage to Blair-st. The Town Planning Board has approved of the realignment of Blair-st.

**Closure of Swanbourne Terrace, Swanbourne:** It is intended to lease to the Commonwealth of Australia the foreshore strip of land abutting the Swanbourne training camp. Included in this area is a public road known as Swanbourne Terrace, and it is proposed to close this road northward of the northern alignment of Wood-st., to enable the land to be included within the lease. This road is not constructed and terminates at a dead-end near the rifle range.

**Closure of portion of Higham-rd., North Fremantle:** The State Housing Commission has acquired a number of lots in a private subdivision of freehold land at North Fremantle, for the purpose of erecting thereon a block of 36 flats. To consolidate the area, the commission desires that portion of a public road, known as Higham-rd., be closed and that the contained land be vested in the commission. The North Fremantle Municipality has no objection to the proposal,\* and the Town Planning Board has also indicated its agreement.

**Closure of Bond-st., North Fremantle:** The Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd. have acquired the whole of the lands abutting Bond-st., North Fremantle, and have applied for the closure of this street to consolidate their holding. The North Fremantle Municipality has approved of the closure of this street. On closure being completed, it is proposed to dispose of the land within Bond-st. to the company with the approval of the Governor.

**Closure of portion of Archdeacon-st., Victoria Park:** The Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth is the owner of the lands fronting both sides of the portion of Archdeacon-st., between Balmoral and Camberwell-sts., and desires the closure of the portion of Archdeacon-st. for the extension of the school buildings. The City of Perth has approved of the closure and desires the contained land to be granted to the council to enable the land to be sold to the adjoining holder in order to recoup the council for the cost of extending Berwick-st. in lieu of the use of Archdeacon-st.

Those are the proposals in the Bill, and there are maps indicating the location of each of the streets concerned. Mr. Simpson has one, and I have another here which can be made available to members if they desire to peruse it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.25]:** This is the usual Bill brought down each year in regard to areas that have been resumed after discussions with various local authorities. It can be accepted that the proposals have been thoroughly examined and are in accordance with the wishes of the local authorities concerned. As the Minister said, he supplied me with a map, which has been circulated in case some members may be concerned with resumptions or with closure of roads in their territory. The Bill is quite in order and has our support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill. Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Closure of University Avenue, Hollywood:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I wonder whether the Minister would report progress? I would like to make a few more inquiries.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have no objection to reporting progress. Progress reported.

#### **BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 3, 4 and 8 and had disagreed to Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7.

#### **BILL—STATISTICS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

#### **BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Assembly's Message.*

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

#### **BILL—CEMETERIES ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### **BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North) [4.30]** in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill in which it is proposed to amend the Marketing of Onions Act of 1938-1953 by the introduction of one small amendment which will allow of the free marketing of onions and their free harvesting from the 31st day of July in each year until the 16th day of November in each

year. It is during this period that the production of onions in Western Australia falls below the Western Australian demand. It becomes necessary at such a time to rely on imported onions from the Eastern States, New Zealand and Egypt.

During this period, Western Australia has to import sufficient quantities of onions to meet its demands, and has done so to the extent of an annual average purchase of some £80,000 per annum over the past seven years. However, it is of interest to note that during the year 1954-1955, the cost of imported onions to wholesalers in this State had increased to some £127,000 odd as against an import figure of £45,000 in the year 1948-1949.

This comparison brings sharply into relief how much we are beginning to rely on imported onions, as each year our demand increases and our local supply falls successively further behind as time progresses. From the above figures we find that in each and every year referred to the board has been forced to allow of importations at a considerably higher price than that which they were offering to the Western Australian grower. I refer again to the 1954-1955 figure, which showed an average import price of £84, whereas our own Western Australian growers were able to receive an amount of only £42 through the management of the Onion Board.

I will now briefly indicate the prices which have been paid by wholesalers to importers of onions over the past seven years, as compared with the then ruling price being paid by the board, as a wholesale board price to the growers. The figures are as follows:—

Year	Tons	Imported Price	Wholesale Board Price
		£	£
1948-49	1,510	29 0 0	20 15 0
1949-50	2,525	35 0 0	23 0 0
1950-51	723	91 to 113	31 5 0
1951-52	1,304	60 0 0	40 2 6
1952-53	2,084	50 0 0	41 15 0
1953-54	1,350	68 0 0	42 0 0
1954-55	1,590	78 to 90	42 0 0

Surely under such circumstances as these it is a reasonable and just submission to this Parliament that the restrictions imposed on the growers by the Act are not in their best interests. If during a shortage of locally grown products the board can return only £42 a ton to a grower, surely such a grower is entitled to the sum of £84 in the same market which is paying that price for imported onions. Where can it be justifiably said that the board is entitled to claim a sum of five per cent. on the sale of W.A.-grown onions at such a time; whereas a grower who could produce onions at such a time would have an import market to contend with, returning him a price range of some 100 per cent. over and above the board's average prices?

Let me draw the attention of the House to the sharp comparison that where a 5 per cent. impost is charged in such circumstances it means in a body of growers one man in every 20 devotes himself to growing onions purely to keep in office a board which is powerless to help him from the months of July to November in each year. It is also of interest to note that during this period in each year onions are almost exclusively grown in country areas.

It is therefore with a view to encouragement of production in country areas in such months that the proposed amendment is being submitted for the approval of this House. Any marketable product produced in country areas suffers from considerable heavy impositions by way of transport costs to market. Let me quote produce grown at Carnarvon which, in the first instance, is subjected to an overland freight cost of £14 6s. per ton, plus auctioneer's selling commission of 8½ per cent. and, finally, as the Act stands at present, a further 5 per cent. for a benevolent board.

I feel I should emphasise that the purpose of this Bill is definitely to encourage the growing of onions at a time when they are in short supply in this State. The figures already given show that under the administration of the board the situation with regard to the importing of onions is growing annually, and is therefore a loss to the economy of this State. Should the position be even checked and finally or ultimately reversed, it could do only a benefit to the growers and to the State.

The board has had ample opportunity to proclaim a period of the year to cover the purpose outlined in this Bill, but it has failed to do so. Therefore, I feel that if growers could be sure that from a certain given period in each year they would be encouraged to grow and sell their produce on an open market in competition with high priced importation, such a field of investment would be viewed in a much more appreciable light than under present circumstances. One does not deny the problems associated with the keeping of onions grown in Western Australia, and this factor makes it all important that we endeavour to grow them all the year round and so enjoy a balanced market.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Can we grow them all the year round?

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is the proposal in the Bill; and to grow them in country areas, which are the only known places which can produce out-of-season onions. Before taking the steps outlined in this Bill, I would like to advise that the position was explained to the Market Gardeners' Association of W.A. This association is represented by a market gardener membership of some 310 growers. It is representative of Osborne Park, Wanneroo, Spearwood, Pickering Brook, Karragullen, York, Kelmscott, Gosnells, Balcatta, and the Gascoyne planters' association, and is

the largest organisation of its kind in Western Australia. This organisation gave consideration to the situation, and I read for the benefit of the House the following letter received from its secretary—

At the executive meeting of the above association held on Friday last, I reported on our telephone conversation of last week concerning the harvesting and marketing of onions during the season when onions are in short supply and difficult for gardeners to produce.

Between the period mentioned, namely, 31st July to the 15th November, York and Kalgoorlie growers supply a large proportion of the onions which reach the metropolitan markets. Growers in those district as well as those in the metropolitan districts, able to grow limited quantities, have always shown strong resentment to having had to pay two commission charges. They feel the five per cent. deducted on behalf of the Onion Marketing Board is most unjust because the board renders no service.

Your endeavour to have all onions harvested and marketed from the 31st July to the 15th November, exempted from the Onion Marketing Act, has the full support of our members.

I will now quote briefly from the report of the 1955 Royal Commission into the marketing of onions. Under the heading of "Price Incentive," the Royal Commissioner said—

If growers whether in Spearwood or any other areas, supply the State with good quality onions during the off season, it is only right that they be paid more than the prevailing seasonal rates. If this is not done a grower may as well take his chance and get what he can during the season.

I feel that under free marketing these incentive payments would automatically go the way of the good growers who produced onions when they were wanted and such payments would have the effect of weaning some growers from poor growing habits.

At this stage I offer no further comment on the Bill and commend it to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. L. C. DIVER** (Central) [4.40]: As one who represents primary industries, and who is interested in orderly marketing, I would say that in all instances where the growers of any produce wish to have orderly marketing it is our policy to support them, provided that a majority in that industry are prepared loyally to stand by the principles of orderly marketing.

Unfortunately, the people who grow onions in Western Australia, or who have been doing so over the last few years, have been of a type, in the main, who want all the advantages of orderly marketing and none of the disadvantages of having to deliver a restricted quantity in order that they might enjoy a reasonable price. This Bill is in conformity—as Mr. Willesee has pointed out—with the recommendations contained in the report of the Royal Commissioner who inquired into matters relating to the marketing and distribution of onions.

I think this Bill is desirable as it is in line with suggestions set out in the commissioner's report. The report was comprehensive and in the last paragraph of Section 4, the commissioner said—

The enigma of the onion industry is that while we have such a large surplus as I have pointed out from Christmas until March, no local onions are usually available in commercial quantities at all in June, July, August and September. A partial answer to the surplus problem may be to grow a better keeping onion which will last over these months, to provide better storage facilities on the gardens themselves and to consider the possibility of commercial refrigerated storage.

Then, in the latter part of the report, under Section 15 the Royal Commissioner goes on to say—

The only answer is to repeal the present Marketing of Onions Act and revert to free marketing. Under free marketing, it will be lawful for growers to sell their onions at all times of the day and night. Growers can hawk them about the city and the country and get whatever prices they can, without fear of inspectors watching them. Growers will have to find their own markets and after a season or two they will know by experience how many onions it is profitable to grow.

Under free marketing, I do not think that the public will be any worse off than now. The law of supply and demand will dictate the prices until the industry comes to its senses, and produces less onions. During this period, I do not think that the public will pay any more for onions than is being paid under Board control.

I consider that there is no more justification for an Onion Board than there is for a Green Pea Board, a Cabbage Board, a Turnip Board, a Cauliflower Board, a Radish Board, a Beetroot Board, or a Spinach Board. According to official figures supplied by the Onion Board, the public of Western Australia eat only one onion per month, and in view of this fact,

I consider that the onion is of no more importance to the consumer than the abovementioned vegetables.

Mr. Smith, the Royal Commissioner, came to this conclusion, after a long investigation into the marketing of this commodity. I am sorry he had to make such a report, but we cannot get away from the facts which he has set out for us to read.

It is the scarcity of onions over the months referred to which has been responsible for this Bill. I agree with Mr. Willesee that it would appear that by opening up the market to the growers over this specified period one objection will be overcome. But this will be only the forerunner of other legislation which will be requested to release control over the growers, and no doubt it will prove to be a lesson to those growers who desire to grow onions in Western Australia, particularly in the Spearwood district. From a reading of the report, it seems that that is where most of the trouble arises. Apparently that area is seething with discontent in regard to the marketing of onions.

The problem will be partially solved if the Bill is passed and I think that, by the end of next session, the market will be free so that these people can be taught the proper scheme of things. Also, we are reaching the stage where the marketing in this direction will be timely because the producers have, from time to time, benefited from orderly marketing, and in order to remind other primary industries of the benefits to be obtained from such marketing, this Bill could prove to be a good test case which can be looked to by other industries in the future when, no doubt, they will be clamouring to their representatives in Parliament for the retention or the reintroduction of orderly marketing.

**HON. F. D. WILLMOTT** (South-West) [4.49]: I do not wish to delay the House for very long. I am in full agreement with what has been said by previous speakers, and with the contents of the Bill. Firstly, it will foster decentralisation by assisting those growers in the Carnarvon district in their production of onions. Also, it does, to a certain extent, implement the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner who inquired into this industry in 1955. I would like to quote a further paragraph from his report, which reads as follows:—

In addition to taking evidence, I endeavoured, by personal inspection, to gain an insight into every phase of both production and marketing.

He goes on, in paragraph 11, to say this—

For example, I feel that free marketing is the only solution of the onion industry's problems, whilst orderly marketing is the post on which both the egg and potato industries must lean.

No price manipulation can extricate the onion industry from its entanglement of over-production.

So this Bill does, to some extent, implement the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. The overproduction that has been alluded to does not occur in the months to which this Bill refers as has been pointed out by Mr. Willesee. I support the measure.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South) [4.52]: I am in favour of orderly marketing; and in the legislation that has been passed by both the State and Commonwealth Parliaments, provision has been made for the orderly marketing of the primary products grown in this country. I do not agree with the argument that we should make a horrible example of the onion growers in order to induce growers of other primary products to support loyally the system of orderly marketing that has been set up to protect them.

It seems to me that there must be something fundamentally wrong, not necessarily among the growers, but either with the legislation that controls the Onion Board or with its administration and its attendant activities. I could visualise a similar position arising with potato marketing. As a result of over-production in some districts, certain growers, unmindful of anyone except themselves, sometimes ruin the market for their fellow growers. Surely it is within the power of the Onion Board—as it is within the power of the Potato Board—to regulate the activities and protect the interests of the majority of the growers!

I do not intend to oppose the Bill, because obviously the Onion Board has fallen down on its job. That being so, I cannot understand why it is left to a private member to introduce a Bill such as this to assist some of the growers. In view of the Royal Commissioner's report and of what appears to be the general feeling—even the feeling that seems to exist among members of Parliament—in respect to the administration of the Onion Board, I consider that we should have been called upon to give thought to another form of legislation to deal with this matter.

I hope the member who introduced this Bill can clear up a doubt I have when he replies to the debate. That doubt is with respect to what effect the passing of this Bill will have on the operations of the board and the general overall average return to the onion growers of this State. Is it intended to take out of the control of the board those growers who will be producing during the period of high prices so that the benefit of those high prices will not be gained by the board; so that the remainder of the growers in this State will then get only such return from the growing of their onions during other periods of the year that may be offering

when onions are in more plentiful supply and consequently the prices are lower? Will this tend to create a privileged section of onion growers? I would like the mover of this Bill to deal with those questions when he replies to the debate.

Also, I am not clear as to what is expected to be saved by proposing to remove these people from the control of the board and the legislation governing their activities. Is it only to give them the right to market them without any supervision or control of the board during a period of scarcity and high prices, or is it merely that they do not want to be under the supervision or control of the board and so save themselves the payment of commission and of meeting the general expenses of the board which I understand are pretty high? Judging from the figures I have here relating to the board's expenses they appear to be higher than they should be.

However, if that is the only saving, I am wondering why it is necessary to introduce this Bill to cover only a section of the growers. The only other point I wish to raise is: What is the attitude of the growers generally to this Bill? An extract from one letter that was received was read, but I am not sure whether the gentleman who wrote it speaks for all growers. He is a gentleman connected with the growers of onions and one to whom we have referred before in connection with similar legislation. But I am of the opinion that his views are not representative of the whole of the market gardening section of the industry for which he professes to speak sometimes.

I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill. In this instance from what one can hear privately and judging from the Royal Commissioner's report, the Onion Board has been an outstanding failure among our orderly marketing legislation. However, I am not supporting this legislation with a view to stimulating the activities of other boards if those boards have not the control over the growers that they should have. It is for us to pass legislation to give them sufficient power so that they can maintain control over the industry.

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

## **BILL—WHEAT POOL ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.58] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to overcome the unfortunate oversight which occurred of not proclaiming the parent Act as provided in Section 1 of that measure. Incidentally, I might

interpolate here that the parent Act was instituted in 1932 by Hon. Sir Charles Latham; but since that period, successive Governments have omitted to proclaim the Act. The Solicitor General has advised that, as a result, all proceedings taken under the Act are invalid. The Bill, therefore, seeks to provide this necessary validity.

As members probably are aware, the purpose of the Act is to constitute and incorporate the trustees of the Wheat Pool, and to define their powers and authority. Prior to the introduction of the Bill, the Wheat Pool, had, for approximately ten years, conducted wheat pool operations in Western Australia, and had handled about 70 per cent of the wheat grown in the State. Its business, broadly speaking, was to sell the wheat for those growers who were participants in the co-operative scheme. It was a registered firm, the trustees of which were not permitted to make any profit. The whole of the proceeds from the sale of the wheat, less the cost of handling and selling was returned to the growers.

The trustees were elected from time to time by the Growers' Council, a body which was elected by the pool members themselves.

As I have said, the trustees of the Wheat Pool, as it existed at that time, constituted the members of a registered firm, but, as it was a non-profit making firm, the Companies Act was not applicable, and there was no provision existing in any other Statute.

The purpose of the parent Act was to transfer the business of the Wheat Pool to the same trustees as a corporate body. This, of course, also had the advantage of facilitating contracts and other business as these would then be undertaken in the name of the corporate body instead of in the names of the four members of the firm, thus avoiding the numerous difficulties which usually accompany the death or retirement of a member of a firm. Further amendments to the Act in 1948 and 1949 gave the trustees the power, firstly, to conduct a voluntary Oat Pool in Western Australia and then to make provision for a f.a.q. standard for oats.

For the information of members who may not know these facts, I would mention that a pool member is a grower who has delivered to the pool not less than 50 per cent of his previous year's marketable crop, and has signed a promise form for the forthcoming season; or any person who can satisfy the trustees that he is financing any of his family or relations in the working or development of a wheat farm, such persons so financed being qualified for membership.

The wheat-growing areas of Western Australia are divided into 20 districts, such districts being defined by the trustees with



the approval of the growers council. The boundaries of the districts may be changed from time to time as the trustees or growers' council may think fit. One councillor is elected annually for each district by the pool members of that district. Trustees were originally the trustees of the Wheat Pool when administered as a private firm. On the 30th September each year, one trustee retires from office and his place is filled by a person elected by the growers' council, a retiring trustee being eligible for re-election.

Almost 25 years have passed since the parent Act became law, but it has not yet been proclaimed. Since then many transactions have taken place, but as the law stands they were invalid. The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Act so that all those transactions will be validated. It will also be the responsibility of the Government to see that the Act is proclaimed. 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*.

*House adjourned at 5.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Friday, 14th December, 1956.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### HARBOURS.

*Cargo and Revenue, Bunbury and Albany.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

- (1) What was the total tons of cargo—
  - (a) exported;
  - (b) imported;

through the port of Bunbury for the financial years 1949-50 to 1955-56, inclusive?

- (2) What was the total tons of cargo—
  - (a) exported;
  - (b) imported;

through the port of Albany for the financial years 1949-50 to 1955-56, inclusive?

- (3) What was the total revenue received from all sources by the—

- (a) port of Bunbury;
- (b) port of Albany;

during the financial years 1949-50 to 1955-56, inclusive?