

could never have had the Narrows bridge. The people who become the leaders of various parties are the doers. As Professor Murdoch said in the week-end Press, there are five per cent. of the people who are doers and do things and I am glad that we have doers on our executive.

We will hear a lot about the trees that will have to be destroyed to make way for the aquatic centre, but we will plant more trees. Four trees were removed in Subiaco to make way for a hall but 22 were planted in their place. Our car parks are being lined with trees and our roads are hemmed with bushes and trees. It may be said that the member for Subiaco is against trees, but no. I think country members have great temerity if they vote against this measure. Have they not devastated the country areas, all of which are sacred to me, and not only the 20 acres in King's Park? The ravages of man have caused floods both here and in the Eastern States.

Mr. Bovell: Crocodile tears!

Mr. POTTER: Floods and wind erosion have been caused by the removal of trees. Bogie after bogie has been raised in opposition to this measure. In conclusion, I would quote from "Peace News" of the 9th August last, where we read—

#### The Bogeyite.

Fear is an incurable prepossession. Against it reason and argument are unavailing. Man must have his bogey and no man insists upon his right to that inheritance more persistently than the Englishman.

Mr. Hall: It makes him a bogeyite.

Mr. POTTER: Yes. To continue—

The more you are able to prove that the particular project is practicable in an engineering point of view, the more hopeless will be your chance of persuading the bogeyite that his fears are groundless. When at last the canal has been cut, or the railway is made, and it is found that the world still goes on as before—except that there has been a great increase in the comfort and convenience of the general public—everybody exclaims: "Why was not this grand work done sooner?" But the bogeyite is not a bit abashed. He merely transfers his attention to other fields of enterprise, and he scans the horizon of civilisation for the appearance of a new enemy.

The strange thing to note about these bogies is that they are always directed against works of utility.

That seems to be the position in regard to this Bill. What a protest there was when we built the flats at Subiaco, and how many protests were raised. It was said

the flats would become slums. Subiaco was deprived of a hall for 25 years because a site could not be agreed on. A referendum was held, eventually, but no hall was built. However, some of my opponents in the last election have gone ahead with the hall and built it. I have no protest to voice about it. I might not like the location or the architectural design but I trust I am big enough not to stand in the way of any form of progress. I will never allow my body, dead or alive, to hinder the wheels of progress.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 11th September, 1957.

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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, Nollamara Land Vesting.
- 2, Western Australian Marine Act Amendment.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3).  
Introduced by Hon. E. M. Heenan.
- 2, Traffic Act Amendment (No. 3).  
Introduced by Hon. L. A. Logan.

**BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM** (Central) [4.35]: I have had a good look at this Bill and I can see nothing very wrong with it. There are only two objects. One is to bring all magistrates under the Public Service Act; and evidently they are all to be known as stipendiary magistrates in the future—the Minister can correct me if I am wrong. The other object is to fix an age limit, not for the present magistrates but for future appointees. I do not suppose that, because of this alteration, magistrates will do any less in the future than they have done in the past.

I hate to think that people are compelled to retire at 65 years of age when they can usefully serve their State beyond that age. I know that younger members are looking forward to advancement or promotion, and that that can only come about by the older members retiring. But as those younger members approached the age of 65 they would probably be glad to have an opportunity to serve another five years. Therefore I hope that the younger members will not consider that it is a good policy to compel efficient and capable civil servants to retire at 65. I support the second reading.

**HON. R. F. HUTCHISON** (Suburban) [4.37]: I think this Bill will help to improve conditions for our judiciary and that magistrates should have their positions assured so that they can give of their best. We need good judgment and a conscientious service to be given to the public. The Bill is a good one, and I do not think there will be any opposition to it.

There should be a retiring age of 65, although the position at the moment is rather haphazard, because the present magistrates will retire at 70 years of age. A retiring age of 65 would mean that these people would be brought into conformity with the rest of the people in the State. All the provisions in this Bill will be for the benefit of our judiciary, and these men will in future know just where they stand. This in turn will make for stability. I have much pleasure in supporting the measure.

**HON. E. M. HEENAN** (North-East—in reply) [4.38]: As Mrs. Hutchison has pointed out, although this is a short Bill it is a rather important one because it affects a branch of the judiciary, and it is satisfactory to note that a number of members have interested themselves in the measure, have analysed it, and have given it their support. A few points were raised during the debate, and I think it would be a good idea if I replied to them.

In the first place, Mr. Cunningham referred to the fact that under the provisions of the Bill magistrates now in office will have a retiring age of 70 years, whilst persons appointed subsequently will be required to retire at 65 years. It is contended that this will not tend to relieve the present shortage of magistrates. It is explained that subsequent to the passing of the 1930 Act several resident magistrates were appointed stipendiary magistrates, and in consequence the age for their retirement became 70 years instead of 65 years.

The other resident magistrates now holding office all had reason to expect that in time they, too, would be appointed as stipendiary magistrates. For that reason it was deemed equitable that all magistrates now holding office should have a uniform retiring age of 70 years. The position in regard to future appointees, however, is different, as on their appointment they will have no doubt that by the terms of their appointment they will be required to retire at 65 years of age unless the Act is subsequently amended to extend their retiring age.

There are at present four magistrates who have already attained the age of 60 years, or who will shortly attain that age; and under the provisions of this Bill their services will be retained until they reach 70 years of age, an extension of five years. This will considerably improve the present position and the position for the next eight or nine years, because of this extension of the period of their services. It is probable that any future appointee will have up to 25 years of service ahead of him before attaining the age of 65 years, so the position would not be affected in any way for upwards of 25 years. As already explained, if a shortage of qualified persons exists in future then the Government of the day can take action to amend the legislation to provide for a later retiring age, if deemed necessary.

The question was also raised by Mr. Cunningham as to appeals and the interpretation of "magistrate" in the Public Service Act. It is correct that "magistrate" is interpreted in the Public Service Act as a resident magistrate, police magistrate or a magistrate of a local court. However, Clause 8 (5) of the Bill provides that stipendiary magistrates are deemed to be employees within the meaning and for the purposes of the Public Service Appeal Board Act, 1920. It is not correct that a magistrate would be chairman of the Public Service Appeal Board when hearing an appeal by a brother magistrate.

The Public Service Appeal Board is constituted with a Supreme Court judge as chairman and a magistrate as deputy chairman. The deputy chairman acts in cases where a judge is not available to preside. In a case where a magistrate is the appellant, the chairman who is a

judge will preside. This was the case when resident magistrates appealed against their salary classification subsequent to the last reclassification.

It was suggested that the salaries being paid to magistrates were insufficient to attract persons with the necessary qualifications. That may be true in some respects since new appointees are usually stationed at remote areas on initial assignment. But it is also doubtful whether an increase in remuneration would induce legal practitioners to remove to remote areas. With the enactment of this measure the salaries of all magistrates will be determined by the Public Service Commissioner and magistrates will have the right to appeal to the Public Service Appeal Board presided over by a judge against the Public Service Commissioner's decision. That is what the magistrates themselves desire.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. E. M. DAVIES in the Chair; Hon. E. M. HEENAN in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Tenure of office:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That the words "sixty-five" in line 5, page 4, be struck out and the word "seventy" inserted in lieu.

I consider that the age of 70 years is young enough for magistrates to retire. That is the retiring age fixed for judges for the future, and we are assuring that magistrates at present holding office shall also retire at 70. The later retiring age would be an attraction to the higher qualified legal practitioners to join the public service as magistrates.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: The age of 65 has been accepted as the retiring age throughout most services, particularly in government services. In both the State and Commonwealth Public Service the retiring age is 60, with the option of an extension to 65 years. I have known numerous civil servants who elected to retire at 65 years instead of 60. A number of them maintain that they should retire at an age suitable to the work on which they have been engaged. They all seem to be content to retire at 65. I might point out that in the Police Force the retiring age is 60 years. It can therefore be seen that the retiring age of 70 is getting away from all accepted practice. It is quite all right for the age to be 65 years with a right of appeal to the Public Service Commissioner if requested, to retain the services of an officer until he has reached the age of 70 years. The retiring age of 65 will be in conformity with the retiring age in all public services.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I hope that members will abide by the provision in the Bill. I would point out that the ordinary magistrate retires at 65 and that has been the position for many years. Only a small number of stipendiary magistrates have had the right to continue in office until they were 70.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Don't resident magistrates usually become stipendiary magistrates?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Because of the rather unsatisfactory position that has obtained, there have only been a few vacancies for stipendiary magistrates from time to time. I think that under the Act only 12 could be appointed. But the ordinary magistrate had the right to expect, or hope, that as soon as a vacancy occurred he would become a stipendiary magistrate; and the only difference between the two positions was that a stipendiary magistrate could continue in office until he was 70, whereas the ordinary magistrate retired at 65.

So all the present magistrates really have the right to be appointed until they reach the age of 70, and that is what the Bill proposes. The law has been such that magistrates have had reason to expect that they could continue until 70; and to do the right thing by the present occupants of the magistracy, the Bill provides that they shall all continue until that age. But in future, if the Bill is passed, there will not be any ambiguity or doubt when a man is appointed a magistrate,

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There would not be any under my amendment, either.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: He will know full well that his appointment will continue only until he reaches the age of 65, which I consider is a fair enough age. The qualifying examination is not exceedingly difficult. If a young man wishes to become a magistrate he can qualify by the time he reaches the age of 30 or 35. I do not suppose he would be appointed before then, because practical experience would be necessary. Magistrates have a long tenure of office, and it has to be borne in mind that there will be fresh generations coming along all the time. There is substantial merit in the provision in the Bill, and right will be done by all concerned if it is carried in its present form.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I want to know whether these magistrates are covered by superannuation and to what age they pay into the fund. The age of retirement in the Railway Department is 65; but there are special arrangements whereby a man can retire, with superannuation, at 60. If a man continues to work beyond that age, he does not make any further contribution to the fund between the ages of 60 and 65.

Some years ago I mentioned that an anomaly had arisen in this regard. One railway engine driver was paying into the fund with a view to retiring at 60. Because of a shortage of drivers, the department persuaded him to continue working with a view to his retiring at 65. But he was unlucky enough to be accused of being under the influence of liquor, and was dismissed from the service. The result was that through remaining in the service at the request of the department for an extra period, he lost all his superannuation benefits. I am wondering whether it is a good thing to carry these people to the age of 70. With the increase in the population, a fair age for retirement would be 65.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Mr. Heenan's remarks were not very convincing. These magistrates are not ordinary citizens, inasmuch as theirs is a different education from that of other people. They have to be trained in the law and must possess a considerable amount of common-sense. I would ask Mr. Heenan whether he would like to feel that he was compelled to retire on reaching 65, having all the knowledge of the law that he possesses and having practised for so many years. He could not qualify to be a magistrate after 65.

There are not very many men with the qualifications that are required for this work, and the Government is entitled to have the best men it can obtain to administer the law. If we are to encourage the best type of people to take up this work, we must give them security of tenure. I guarantee that Mr. Heenan would be able to give useful service to his profession for another 10 years after he had reached the age of 65.

All those who have objected to the age of 70 have been Goldfields members. I do not know whether that is because magistrates there are not quite as good as others after they reach the age of 65, or whether there is some other reason for the opposition. It seems strange that we have had no objections from anyone else.

Hon. G. Bennetts: A lot of ordinary workers are being put off at 65.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member is talking about a different class of people. There are not many of these magistrates. I think there are only 12. Surely we want the best type of man that we can get. It is not so long ago that we fixed the retiring age of judges at 70, and they are in the position of being able to condemn a man to death. Men have reached a greater age than 70 and remained in official positions.

I have seen men in that category in this Chamber, and I hope to see Mr. Bennetts still here beyond the age of 65. A man must have an active brain

at that age to be able to contest the younger element in this place. One is not as quick on the uptake at my age as one was 30 years ago. But is it suggested that I should have retired five years ago? Of course I did not; and the public were behind me, or I would not be here now.

We should let these men remain in office until they reach 70 years of age, unless they become inefficient or unable to carry out their duties. There is no member in this Chamber who will not remain here until that age so long as the public agree he is the man they want.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Sir Charles overlooks the fact that the limit of 65 years is to apply only to future appointees.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I know that.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: There are 17 magistrates in this State at present, including the one in the Children's Court; but with the growth of population, there will be more in years to come. The duties of a magistrate involve much hard work in some parts of the State.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Would it be any harder than that of judges?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Long distances of travel are involved between townships on the Goldfields; and courts must be held at frequent intervals, calling for a considerable degree of physical fitness on the part of magistrates. In the past there has been no agitation against magistrates retiring at 65 years of age.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The expectation of life has been extended in the last few years.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Those applying for position as magistrates will know the conditions of service.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Will you get the best men?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: We will get the best available. A man who enters Parliament knows that with luck he will remain here until well beyond 65 years of age.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Positions as magistrates have been filled mainly by clerks of court in this State, and they have made excellent magistrates. Clerks of court at large country centres gain much valuable experience, and are encouraged to take the necessary examination in order to qualify for the position of magistrate. A retiring age of 70 years might remove that incentive to qualify. I think we should retain the clause as it is.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 11—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

**BILL—ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. F. J. S. WISE** (North) [5.10]: This small measure appears to meet the need and prescribe the requirements outlined by Mr. MacKinnon. I think the point raised by Mr. Heenan to facilitate the advertising is a good one, and I am pleased to see his amendments on the notice paper. As I do not wish to delay matters, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. L. A. Logan in the Chair; Hon. G. C. MacKinnon in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 3 amended:

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I move an amendment—

That the words "approved by the registrar and" in lines 12 and 13, page 2, be struck out.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I support the amendment.

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

Clause 3—Section 7 amended:

On motions by Hon. E. M. Heenan, clause amended by—

Inserting after the word "words" in line 24, page 2, the words "approved by the registrar."

inserting after the word "lines" in line 26, page 2, the word "six."

striking out the word "and" in line 28, page 2.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

**MOTION—SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTS AND ROUTES.***To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson:—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon school bus contracts and the curtailment of school bus routes and the method of the Department of Education in regard to same.

**HON. J. McI. THOMSON** (South—in reply) [5.17]: In replying to the debate on this motion, and particularly to the speech made by the Minister for Railways, I would say that if the department intends to rely on the fact that there are

a great many contractors operating second-hand buses, then in my opinion—and no doubt in the opinion of many others—this is something that requires investigation and justifies the appointment of a select committee.

There are many parents and citizens' associations throughout the State, particularly in the country areas, that are very concerned about the unsatisfactory state of the vehicles being used on, in some cases, very bad roads. In many instances the buses are bordering on a complete state of dilapidation; they are absolutely worn out. From time to time we hear serious complaints from various organisations that the school buses on which the children are obliged to travel are very old; and, as I have already said, practically worn out.

The bus contractors' reply to this is that they are unable to provide any reserve fund for the purchase of new vehicles. From what we see and hear from time to time, that is very true in the country areas. While the bus contractors are most anxious to provide new buses which would adequately meet the needs of the case, they are unable to do so because of the cost factor; and, as a result, they are frequently compelled to purchase omnibuses that have been disposed of by companies in the city, after those companies have had the best out of those buses, and after they have completely outlived their usefulness. Indeed, these companies are glad to get rid of them.

If the bus contractors are to run the services in question, the best they can do is to purchase these second-hand vehicles and use them as conveyances to and from school. I think we should view with alarm the fact that this very precious freight of ours—namely, the children—have no alternative but to use these worn-out buses. Accordingly I think, with justification, that something should be done to rectify such an unsatisfactory state of affairs.

I would now like to touch on the Minister's remark concerning bus extensions and spurs not being granted where the cost is exorbitant. It is quite evident from the opinion expressed by the Minister that it is almost a crime for people to live in the outback areas of the State. Too frequently do we hear of instances where senior officers have made most foolish statements to the effect that, "You have elected to live out there and therefore you must put up with the inconvenience and all that goes with it." It is amazing for the authorities to adopt such an irresponsible attitude. From the remarks of the Minister it is quite obvious that this irresponsible attitude does exist in the minds of senior officials. It is indeed regrettable, because they are the people who should be most concerned about such an appalling state of affairs.

Instead of encouraging people to populate our outback areas, and instead of promoting decentralisation, we find—as I have said so frequently—that the attitude of the Government seems to be to the contrary. For example, in the last two financial years over £4,000,000 has been spent on public buildings in the metropolitan area; and, by comparison, only £900,000, or 19 per cent., has been spent in the country areas—where the ratio of the population in the country districts is at least 40 per cent.

I quote these figures to give some indication that there is a great disparity between what is spent in the metropolitan area and what is spent in the country districts. One of the aims of the inquiry will be to endeavour to formulate ways and means to give encouragement and heart to these people who are so affected in the outback areas. From the evidence we have before us by way of correspondence and protests from various organisations in the country, I am sure an inquiry into the question of school bus contracts is completely justified; as it is into the curtailment of spurs, as outlined in my motion.

The people in the country districts, as anywhere else, view with the utmost concern the education of their children; and rightly so. But the continued refusal of the department to extend bus services—and indeed its action to curtail them—compels the parents in many instances to leave their work for long periods, at least twice a day, to transport their children at great expense to the various bus stops. The alternative is, of course, to place these children on correspondence lessons. But I do not think that is at all satisfactory; and it is a position that should be obviated if at all possible.

The Minister for Railways: What would be the average distance that these parents would have to transport their children?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I have it here; and I am about to quote a case which is not uncommon. The case I have in mind is that of a man and his wife. He is a soldier settler—and this also applies in many instances to other soldier settlers in the country areas. This man has a family of seven; four of whom are under school age. They live four miles from the nearest bus route. To catch the bus in question they would have to travel in all 34 miles to school and back. That should be quite unnecessary.

The Minister for Railways: You were saying the parents lost half a day.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I did not say that; I said a considerable amount of time. They lost this time in transporting their children. Yet the department has suggested that in such circumstances the

children should be placed on correspondence lessons. It is difficult to imagine the position of a mother in such a home, bearing in mind the confined conditions that prevail in the homes of war service settlers. Members can picture her trying to supervise the lessons of three children of varying ages while at the same time trying to look after four children who are under school age. This is a most unreasonable thing to ask of any woman; and it is more unreasonable to expect the children to be placed on correspondence lessons, when this could be obviated by extending bus services another two to three miles.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Do you know how many children are on correspondence courses?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No. Does the hon. member know?

Hon. H. K. Watson: No.

Hon. A. R. Jones: The man to whom you refer could have a school of his own.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It would appear therefore that the department has not made any great effort to meet the situation today in the interests of these people. I would like to mention the position of a bus contractor in whose case there is the distinct possibility of litigation ensuing with the department. In February, 1955, he entered into a contract with the department for five years. Under that contract the Minister agreed to pay 16s. per school day and 10s. per week for week-end running.

The contract form in this case was not the same as that used by the department today—it was the type of form that was used previously. The Minister will recall that when moving the motion I said that there are in existence at least three types of forms dealing with contractors. That in itself is entirely wrong. The conditions should remain constant until such time as the contract is renewed. The time to take any other steps that might be required is when it is found necessary to alter the contracts.

It would appear that the contract makes no provision for the route to be reduced. By cutting out spurs, it only gives power, to be mutually agreed upon, to "add to the sum hereinbefore mentioned. That is the sum mentioned in the original contract when it was signed. The form goes on to say that for each additional mile added to the route, the route shall not be lengthened by more than six miles.

So far as lengthening the route is concerned, I know of a contract which has been in operation for only 18 months, and it has been reduced twice by a total of 11 miles. It has been reduced twice, although the contract was for five years. The contractor claims that under the contract—in view of his obligations in respect of

payments on his bus—the department has no right to shorten the route and reduce the payments agreed upon when the contract was first signed. If the department is allowed to do that, from time to time, he, like others, will find himself in a position where he is unable to pay his way.

That is what is concerning many of these contractors; because, under present circumstances, they find themselves in debt through the attitude of the department. As a result of a protest to the department, it did agree to increase the rate per mile so as to partly compensate for less distance. Up to the 15th July last, the total amount due under the existing contract was £1,155, and the contractor had only received £598 16s., leaving a balance owing of £556.

The Minister for Railways: He wants to put his bill in.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I think he has. Apparently because he would not accept the reduced rate, the department has not paid him at all for some considerable time. If that is the case, I say again that these circumstances warrant investigation. Even if he had been paid the amount which the department offered him, he would still be approximately £50 short in accordance with the original contract. That means that the original contract was £50 more than £1,155. That £50 was disregarded. Therefore, when he is paid the balance, he will be short by £50 of the amount specified in the contract into which he entered to operate the bus route.

The Minister for Railways: He has recourse through legal channels.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Up to the present, this man has not been able to get any satisfaction whatsoever; and for that reason he has taken steps to see whether his interests can be safeguarded through legal channels. However, this should be entirely unnecessary, and no contractor should be placed in that position. He should not have to go to court to justify his case; it should be watertight in the first place when he signs the contract.

I think members will agree that that is a most undesirable state of affairs; and I can assure the Minister that there are many similar cases, and the same conditions are applying in many places throughout the State. Because of the degree of dissatisfaction existing amongst the contractors, the department will in a very short time find itself in the position of having great difficulty in obtaining reliable contractors to carry out the work in the future.

In the interests of everybody concerned, it is highly desirable that a close inquiry should be made into these matters and into the curtailment of the spurs, necessitating children having to travel longer distances and being away from their homes from the early hours of the morning until late at night.

I hope the House will agree to the appointment of a select committee.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	11

Majority for 3

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. G. MacKinnon	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. R. C. Mattiske	Hon. A. F. Griffith

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. E. M. Davies
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Noes.

Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery

Question thus passed.

*As to Personnel of Committee.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I move—

That the select committee consist of Hon. J. Murray, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, Hon. W. F. Willesee, Hon. A. R. Jones and the mover.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Under Standing Orders, three members usually constitute a select committee. In this instance I think a membership of three would be adequate to undertake this inquiry. I do not think that the case submitted by the mover was sufficiently strong to require what might be an unwieldy committee to inquire into bus contracts, which have been fully and thoroughly explained. Therefore, I hope the mover will give further consideration to this motion and confine the membership of the committee to three, if for no other reason than that of economy. A committee of three would facilitate the inquiry; and, therefore, I ask the hon. member to consider a move in that direction.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I moved for a membership of five, as I was under the impression that that was the required number.

Hon. H. K. Watson: There were only three members on the War Service Land Settlement Committee.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: However, I am quite prepared to consider a reduction to three, if the House so desires.

Question put and negatived.

*Select Committee Appointed.*

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, select committee appointed consisting of Hon. J. Murray, Hon. F. J. S. Wise and

the mover, with power to call for persons, papers and documents, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned and to move from place to place; and the Committee to report on Thursday, the 31st October, 1957.

**BILL—NEWSPAPER LIBEL AND  
REGISTRATION ACT  
AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd September.

**HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [5.45]: Even though "The West Australian" describes this measure in one of its leaders as a piffling little Bill, it still is of importance to the community of Western Australia, because it takes away from the one news journal of the State the right to dictate the amount of security that has to be put up before a libel action can be commenced. Actually when one examines the measure, that is what it amounts to. Sir Charles has moved to make it possible for persons other than those who are, one might say, almost multi-millionaires, to take action by providing security of only £100.

The hon. member is also endeavouring to make the position such that instead of the action having to be commenced within four months of the libel it may be commenced within 12 months. There are sound reasons for this provision. A person might be out of the State for a period and find on his return that he has been libelled during his absence. When he does return, a period of more than four months might have elapsed from the time the libellous statement was made.

The Bill will allow a person to take action for libel without being restricted to the terms that are at present in the Act whereby the newspaper can almost dictate its own terms of security before the action can be taken. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

**Hon. W. R. Hall** in the Chair; **Hon. Sir Charles Latham** in charge of the Bill:

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 9:

**Hon. C. H. SIMPSON**: The clause seeks to delete a provision in the Act which says that the measure shall come into operation on such-and-such a date. It seems to me that either leaving it in or cutting it out would have no effect except, perhaps, that its removal would destroy the record that it had appeared in the Act. I can see very little purpose in removing this record, and perhaps some virtue in retaining it. I ask the Committee to vote against the clause.

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham**: I have no objection.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 3—Repeal of Sections 3, 4 and 5:

**Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM**: I move an amendment—

That the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

(3) Section three of the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act, 1884, Amendment Act, 1888, is amended by inserting after the word "sufficient" in line 10 of the section the words "up to a maximum of one hundred pounds."

In the old days the plaintiff would be put in the witness box then he would be given such a gruelling that he would not know where he stood, and would go to pieces and start contradicting himself, and have no earthly chance of winning his case. I want to make it clear that if he has a case and desires to give evidence he shall be permitted to do so. All he has to do is to prove his case, and the other party has then to prove that there was no libel.

Amendment put and passed, the substituted clause agreed to.

New Clause:

**Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM**: I move—  
That the following new clause be added:—

4. Section four of the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act, 1884, Amendment Act, 1888, is hereby repealed.

New clause put and passed.

New Clause:

**Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM**: I move—  
That the following new clause be added:—

5. Section five of the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act, 1884, Amendment Act, 1888, is amended by deleting the word "four" in line 4 of the section and substituting the word "twelve."

At present an application to the court must be made within four months of the libellous statement appearing in the newspaper. Sometimes that would be very inconvenient, particularly if the person concerned was in England or some other country. Under the Criminal Code there is no limit as regards defamations—the person concerned could take action 50 years afterwards. In this instance I am extending the period in which action can be taken from four to 12 months.

**Hon. C. H. SIMPSON**: I previously criticised this section because it allowed a person only four months in which to bring an action if he thought he had been



libelled by what had been published in a newspaper. I pointed out that a person might be absent from Australia and have no means of knowing that libellous statements had been published about him until after the four months had elapsed. I ventured the opinion that there should be no time limit; but after talking the matter over, Sir Charles and I came to the conclusion that there was probably some virtue in having a time limit, and I consider 12 months to be reasonable.

New clause put and passed.

Title:

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Title amended by—

Deleting the word "three" in line 3, page 1.

Deleting the word "five" in line 3, page 1.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That before the word "of" in line 3, page 1, the words "to amend Sections three and five" be inserted.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: On a point of information, I would like to ask Sir Charles whether the number "five" is the one deleted with the object of inserting a new clause.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We deleted Clause 4 and Clause 5 will now become Clause 4.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The word "four" will be mentioned before the word "three" if this amendment is agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: In my opinion the Bill should be withdrawn and resubmitted in an amended form. I suggest that the hon. member ask leave to withdraw his amendment and then report progress.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Very well. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Progress reported.

### **BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Received from the Assembly.

*First Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS**  
(Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [6.10]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a first time.

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

Ayes	.....	18
Noes	.....	7
		—
Majority for	.....	11
		—

Ayes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hiscop	Hon. W. F. Willsee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. A. F. Griffith

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. R. C. Mattlake
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. J. Cunningham

Noes.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a first time.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

### **BILL—BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

**HON. C. H. SIMPSON** (Midland) [7.30]: This measure sets out to amend the Bank Holidays Act of 1884-1953. The effect of its being passed would be to close the banks throughout this State on Saturdays. It is quite obvious that the Bill has created a considerable amount of interest, and I think that is evidenced by the attendance of our friends in the gallery tonight. It is also evidenced by the communications which we have received showing the pros and cons from those who support the Bill, and from those who have quite good reasons in their own minds to oppose it.

No doubt amongst those attending to-night there are representatives of both sections; and they are looking to us to speak to this measure with a sense of responsibility, with the idea of considering fairly and equitably the issues involved; and then to make our decision accordingly. I take it that it is our duty to study the pros and cons of the Bill; to look at it from both sides; and to try and secure an equitable issue. In doing that, not only have we to study the representations that have been made to us from one side or the other, but we should also constantly bear in mind the interests of the public at large, because they are the ones who would be mainly affected by the decision we come to on this measure.

The first point we have to discuss is: Are we a competent body to consider the various aspects of this Bill, and, in fact, to perform the functions of an Arbitration Court in trying to arrive at a decision? Because we have to remember that apart from the local effects of closing banks on Saturday mornings, there could flow other effects which have a bearing on the people generally, on commercial

interests, and on businesses generally; and it could have some effect on the attitude of other States in regard to this important question. As I say, we have to consider all these issues; and in weighing them, we must admit that our task is not perhaps an easy one.

As the Bill sets out the issue, it does appear on a reading of it to be a relatively simple question. It merely seeks to amend the Bank Holidays Act by inserting before the words "Easter Eve" in the first line of the Schedule to the Act, the words "each and every Saturday." It may be of interest to members who perhaps have not studied this matter to know exactly how this Act does operate.

It stems from the Bank Holidays Act which is governed by the Bills of Exchange Act, a Commonwealth measure. That sets out the holidays to be observed by banks in the course of the year. Those holidays, which were specified as far back as 1884, include nine particular days. They are Easter Eve, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, and the following days when week days:—New Year's Day, the birthday of the Sovereign, anniversary of the Foundation of the Colony on the 1st June, Coronation Day, the Prince of Wales's Birthday, and the 26th December. When any of the abovementioned shall fall upon a Sunday, the next following Monday shall be a bank holiday.

The Bills of Exchange Act—I have a quotation taken from "The West Australian Banker" of last year—provides, firstly, that under Section 98 banks are obliged to open for presentation of bills of exchange on any ordinary day not prescribed as a bank holiday under the Bank Holidays Act. If the Arbitration Court were to award a five-day week to trading banks covered by State awards, this would not necessarily affect the Commonwealth Bank, which operates under its own Act. This would make it improper for the court to award other bank staffs certain conditions which would not be binding on the Commonwealth Bank staff.

Members will realise that a direct approach to the Arbitration Court would not succeed for the reasons mentioned. It was only natural that those who were interested should seek other means of securing the ends that they sought. Apart from the special issue of this journal—a copy of which was sent to me; which was printed last year; and which contains a tremendous amount of material concerning the five-day week for banks and closure on Saturday mornings, including the whole of the select committee report—there was another edition of "The West Australian Banker" published in July of this year, which gives a great deal more information.

I presume that the information was published because of the nature of the information given to the publisher by the author of the Bill. I do not

see how otherwise the very complete information contained in this publication could have been available. There is no reason why it should not have been printed—it is quite relevant to the case—but it shows that a tremendous amount of trouble was taken to give the history of the case, and to set out in detail the names of the members in the various electorates. Every branch of the banks is set out, including the country branches. The names of the members of the Legislative Assembly representing each area, and also the names of the members in the Upper House who represent the same area, are shown.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Does it give the amount of our respective overdrafts?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That would probably take up too much room. It also gives the address of each individual parliamentarian and shows how he voted last year. It contains the division list, with the party designation alongside each name. In fact, all the information that one would require, if one wanted to make a personal approach to the representative concerned, is contained therein.

I am not saying that is not right from the point of view of those who consider this is a just and equitable measure; or that the method of approach that they employed in this case was not the right one. It is quite understandable—and in fact feasible—that they should take that course. But the question that we have to decide, as I see it, is whether all the issues are in line with the representations made here.

I hope to be able to state a few of the reasons from the other side; and also to suggest that there are other approaches which would offer at least as much chance of success, and would probably secure in a large measure the benefits being sought, while at the same time preserving the public interest in regard to the banking service that they require. It seems to me, considering the matter quite objectively, that there are a number of anomalies in the presentation of this Bill. The first anomaly is that this is a private member's Bill. I, for one, have no objection to a Bill being introduced by a private member. I think we should jealously guard the privilege which members have in this respect. But when it is a Bill with far-reaching consequences which not only affect different sections of the community in this State, but which can set a pattern for action in other States—

Hon. E. M. Davies: That has already been set in the other States.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We suggest if it were a Government measure, then it should be considered in regard to the policy—

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

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: —as a responsible body should on this important question.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There is no reason why a private member's Bill cannot cover those points.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I do not think it is a matter on which the Legislative Council should usurp the functions of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is a House of review.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: A legislative body is too much subjected to the shifting whims of public opinion or political reaction. It should not be called upon to decide a question, the economy of which affects the whole community. In the second place, I think this is linked with my earlier remarks that it is a function of the judiciary and not of a legislative body.

In the third place, I suggest that this is a matter which should be decided on an Australia-wide basis. An understanding should be reached between all the States regarding this important question and some compromise should be worked out. As I mentioned earlier, this would not only substantially secure benefits to those who want them, but at the same time assure the public of a service which they definitely require.

The fourth point is that there could be concerted action, on the part of those who desire this Bill, in relation to their own bank controllers. As far as I can learn, there is no evidence that this approach has properly been made. The present attitude of the spokesmen for the associated banks is that they are hostile to the measure; and I think that is the fourth reason why an important issue such as this should be submitted along those channels before being brought to a body like this for decision.

The fifth point is that there should be an approach on the part of the sponsor of this Bill, or those who require it, to the Government of the day, to initiate discussions, say at a Premiers' conference, so that some uniform action in Australia might be taken.

I have received a number of communications from those who consider their interests would be affected. They are—the Chamber of Commerce, which represents a fairly substantial body of opinion; the Pharmaceutical Guild; the Meat and Allied Trades Federation; the retail traders; people in my own constituency, who have sent me telegrams and letters; and members of the general public with whom I have discussed this matter.

I think it will be realised that years ago when the manual workers sought a five-day week and agreed that the starting

times of work should be earlier than that in other occupations, they submitted as the reason for their application that they required Saturday mornings to do their shopping or attend to banking or other business; and they expected facilities to be provided. But if those facilities are denied them, the logical next step would be for the people affected to ask for a 4½-day week so that they would then have time to do the necessary business which it is recognised that they must do.

In actual fact, I am told that something like that is happening now in Tasmania, where the banks are closed on Saturday mornings. One big concern employs a great number of people of both sexes; and it is more or less a recognised thing that when girls seek occupation with that firm they ask if they can have time off during the week in order to do necessary shopping.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They do that in Perth, and have done it for years and years.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: They may have done. But these facilities are available to them on Saturday mornings in Western Australia, so that the same state of affairs does not arise.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: But they—

The PRESIDENT: Order, please!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: As I said before, that was the general position. It has been claimed that the closure of banks would work all right, because it is already working that way in Tasmania and New Zealand. I cannot speak with any first-hand knowledge of New Zealand because I have not been there; but I have spoken to those who have had holidays in that dominion, and they complain—and I understand all tourists complain—that they were denied those facilities which they had learned to expect and which are provided in other countries of the world.

Of Tasmania, I know something myself, because, quite recently, I was there for two week-ends. I was warned by the folk I met there—and they warned me in a sort of apologetic way—that I must take care to get all I wanted on the Friday because I would not be able to get anything from Friday night to Monday morning. As it happened, all my wants were satisfactorily filled, and it did not matter to me.

But it struck me then as rather extraordinary that a State which caters for the tourist trade as Tasmania does, and which does a very good job in many respects along those lines, should, in this particular regard, deny visitors many of the amenities which they have learned to expect in travelling around. But there it is. In Tasmania that was the position.

And that State is set forth as a pattern of what could be done in other States and what is obviously expected to be done now in Western Australia.

I would point out that of the other mainland States, not one has Saturday morning closure of banks. Until very recently, Queensland had been a Labour State, and the Labour Party was in an almost unchallengeable position for a considerable number of years. Not long ago the Government sent the President of the Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice Matthews, to Tasmania to report on this very matter. We have not been able to get a copy of his report; but I have been informed that, as a result of his investigations, the Queensland Government decided that it could not go ahead with the scheme. It is understood that the report condemned absolutely any similar set-up in Queensland to that which existed in Tasmania.

New South Wales is a Labour State which could have introduced this legislation if it had wished to do so, or if it had thought it would be of benefit to the people. But it has not bothered to do so. In fact, we learn that both in Victoria and New South Wales there is a move on the part of commerce and—we understand—the banks not to restrict trading hours of banks but actually to extend them. It does not call upon employees to work longer hours. What it does do is to stagger the hours they work; so that they are not called upon to do any extra time, but the needs of the public are served over a longer period.

Reasons have been submitted to me in opposition to closure of banks on Saturday mornings. I would mention three of them that were referred to by Mr. Thorn, a former Minister for Labour in the Legislative Assembly. They were read in that House on the 12th October, 1955, and they appear on page 1146 of Hansard of that year. It was pointed out that members of the Perth Chamber of Commerce feel that—

There is a legitimate and real public need to be met by the banks on that day. It would not be desirable to legislate for the closure of the banks on Saturday mornings, whilst ordinary trade is still being carried on. It is considered that whilst ordinary trading is conducted on a Saturday morning, the commercial community, retailers and the public, are entitled to expect banking facilities to be made available to them, especially with respect to change, deposits and withdrawals.

Retailers and others would be called upon to hold large sums of cash over every week-end if the banks were to be closed on Saturday mornings, and this may encourage theft and lead to substantial losses.

The closing of the Commonwealth Savings Bank would be detrimental to the public, who will not have facilities to make deposits of their wages and savings on Saturday mornings.

There is another aspect of this which is fairly substantial when it is totalled up. Many businessmen—probably the majority—work on overdrafts. Normally they bank at the close of each day in order that their debit balance on their account might be as low as possible so as to save interest. But if the banks were closed on Saturday morning it would mean that those people, who are often very busy on that morning and take a considerable amount of cash, instead of being allowed to bank those takings and so reduce by two days the interest term that applies to their overdraft, would be compelled to wait until Monday morning before they could bank; and over a period, that could amount to a considerable sum.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Perhaps the balance is only a myth.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: No; I do not think so. I think it is a reality; but it would be a myth if what I understand the hon. member's remarks to mean were true.

Hon. L. C. Diver: I am judging by the atmosphere.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It is, I think, an axiom that the banks sell service; and there are many trades and professions which provide services in the same way—not only the banks, but, shall we say, transport people, who work during hours when other people, following normal occupations, are at rest; our newspapers; houses of entertainment; people who provide meals; and purveyors of perishables, and such-like commodities. Such people of necessity have to work a six-day and maybe a seven-day week—but those are jobs they chose of their own free will and they cater for a public need. It is obvious that if the service which they provide is needed by the public it must be supplied in order to meet the demand.

It has been stated that owing to the incidence of Saturday morning work there is a big turnover in the staff of the banks. But I would point out that, from the information given to me, that is quite common in other avenues of occupation. Men in the banks are free to accept offers of employment elsewhere. Furthermore, with the background of training they have, when they reach a certain age and are ambitious, they may decide to leave the banks in which they are employed and go into business on their own. That is quite a normal happening in the life of a bank, or any other institution. Therefore I do not think that the turnover in banks is necessarily due to the refusal of people to take employment in banks because they are denied Saturday morning off.

I come now to the question of an approach to the bank controllers. If it is the duty of a bank—and I consider it is—to provide service when needed; and if it happens that the employment of men on Saturday morning denies them privileges which obtain in other occupations, I cannot see any reason why the actual staff rendering public service could not be employed on a roster system so that such members as admittedly may not be required could take time off, and all employees in turn could have at least some mornings free. For years, I worked on a mine for seven days a week.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: That was a long time ago.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It happened that my working pals on other shifts wanted to play football or cricket, and I would change shifts with them at week-ends so that they could enjoy the sports in which at that time I myself was not particularly interested. And I think that could happen in cases such as this.

In any event, it is not my business to tell the banks what they should do; and I am simply suggesting something that might concern the banks very much; because if the Bill becomes law—I am not in a position to say whether or not this Chamber will accept it—the bank chiefs who now frown on the measure could be faced with a fait accompli in regard to the closing of banks on Saturday mornings.

I might suggest that something like the roster system, which is used in the railways—of which I was Minister for three years—in regard to the running staff, could be used. There there is a roster of those who attend to the work of despatching trains and so on. Their hours apply in the ordinary way. But although the clerical staff as a whole do not work on Saturday mornings, a certain number used to be brought back every Saturday morning in order to deal with special work required to be done by heads of departments. Returns might have to be prepared in a hurry, or the Commissioner or C.M.E., or someone such as that might go to the office, necessitating the attendance of staff so that he might do the work he desired to do. That did not prevent the other officers from having time off or, incidentally, changing around, so that if there were continuity of the practice the same ones would not be brought back every time.

I will reiterate the points I made originally. Firstly, the Government should declare its official attitude towards this measure, which has such far-reaching implications. Secondly, a determination of the matter should be a judicial and not a legislative decision. Thirdly, the matter should be decided on an Australia-wide basis. Fourthly, the initial approach by

the employees should be to the bank controllers regarding the desired amenity and the preservation of facilities to serve the public. Fifthly, there should be an approach to the Government to initiate discussions at a Premiers' Conference to determine this question of national importance.

Although I have spoken against the Bill—because I am firmly convinced that this is a wrong approach to the matter—I wish to register wholeheartedly my appreciation of the work that bank officers do in both city and country. I have had long experience of both and have been received with uniform courtesy, and the advice given to me has always been most helpful and valuable.

For 17 years I was secretary of an agricultural society in the country, and the best workers I had there were members of bank staffs. They worked like trojans in all the detailed matters necessary in preparing for a show and in clearing up the clerical work afterwards. I have been told that the roster system would not operate in the country. I understand that two-thirds of the bank personnel are employed in the metropolitan area and one-third in the country. From my experience of those men employed in the country I do not think they would worry much about having Saturday morning off; and in fact, I understand that the hours there are regulated to the weekly half-holiday in the centre concerned.

Time and time again I have seen, outside of bank hours, a man receive a cheque, perhaps for the sale of skins or other produce, and hand it over to the bank officer, who would slip it into his pocket and do the necessary work on his return to the bank. Similarly, if anyone wanted change out of banking hours, it was a common thing for the bank manager to contact his assistant and open the safe in order to give whatever assistance was required.

I believe that some composition of the differences on the one hand of the bank employees, who want this amenity; and, on the other hand, of the bank controllers, who have stated that they do not wish to have it, could be arrived at by compromise: and that would probably have one effect that would be denied to the public if the Bill were passed. It might be very important for a bank to do business at some time on a Saturday morning; and if the Bill became law, they could not legally do that, whether they wanted to or not. That danger might be avoided by an approach such as I have suggested.

I received a letter from a bank officer whom I have known from infancy, and I will quote one part of that letter. The portion of the letter that I desire to quote reads—

Curtailement of hours in Australia has not brought the results that we had hoped. In competition with other

countries we have lost ground. That has been the experience where we have tried to make things easier by shortening working hours. The most progressive countries are the ones which provide the greater facilities rather than those which reduce standards. Perhaps in the days when comptometers, electronics and automation have made their full impact on the working lives of men we may find ourselves faced with a new problem—how to employ our leisure. It is a question well worth considering and the answer is not easy.

For the reasons I have given—the value of which I am convinced of—I will oppose the second reading.

**HON. R. F. HUTCHISON** (Suburban) [8.7]: I supported a similar measure on the last occasion it was before this House; and tonight I will deal with this Bill from the woman's point of view, in the light of what I have seen while travelling throughout Australia. I have had a great deal of correspondence which proves that the people who desire this measure are prepared to back it up, and I think that shows a sincerity of purpose that should not be lightly put aside. Mr. Simpson had a heavy task in trying to justify all that he said.

When I was in Tasmania I paid special attention to this phase of living in that State, particularly from a woman's point of view; and I do not think the position there could be improved on. In Tasmania I saw nobody worried because the banks were closed on Saturdays. Everything went along as smoothly as possible, but much more family happiness was apparent. I have never seen so many families enjoying themselves together in any other place that I have visited. I went to the trots, at what appeared like a picnic ground in comparison with our trotting grounds, and I saw many families there having picnic lunches.

**Hon. L. A. Logan:** Perhaps they had no money with them.

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** Oh yes they had! I asked the housewives what they thought of the position, and they thought it was excellent. With a five-day week the housewives felt it was a godsend, as they could have their gardens dug or their other odd jobs done by their husbands on Saturday and go for an outing on Sunday, or vice versa. They said it worked extremely well.

**Hon. R. C. Mattiske:** Why not give them Friday afternoon off?

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** As time goes on we will have to consider questions such as this; and to say that people must work all the time is nonsense. Mr. Simpson said that female employees would ask for time off to do shopping; but that has been the practice for years. For a long

time girls have been given 1½ hours off a week to do their shopping; and that has been the practice with the various firms by which my daughters have been employed.

Someone must always be first to take any worthy step, and this measure gives an opening for such a step to be taken. That is why I support it. There is no need for the banks to open on Saturday mornings as they are open for only a very short time as it is. Late night shopping and Saturday morning shopping are a misery to the housewife. What is wrong with changing the pay day? That would be a good thing for most families in this State; because if pay day were on Monday, they would have all the week in which to work out their requirements.

Some changes such as that have been made in Tasmania, and they are examples of good management and good living which we should endeavour to achieve. Reform always has to be brought to the people; and I will fight hard for the closing of shops and banks on Saturday mornings because I know there is no need for them to be open.

**Hon. R. C. Mattiske:** Why didn't they do that under the Labour Government in New South Wales or in Queensland?

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** I do not know why men do lots of things.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Will the member of the public who is standing in the gallery please be seated?

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** As members know, I am a great exponent of equality in Government and in everything that we do. Women are supposed to be the equal of men in almost every other walk of life, and yet are supposed not to be fit to deal with legislation. This measure would be a great step forward, and the fact that it is a private member's Bill should make it easy for us to come to a decision about it. I could not help feeling that Mr. Simpson, when speaking, forgot how many times he has said in this House that it is a House of review. He did say last year that there was a Leader of the Opposition in this House.

**Hon. C. H. Simpson:** What is your idea of a non-party Bill?

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** I am not concerned about non-party Bills. If legislation is here for me to discuss, and if I think it worth supporting, I will take part in the debate and support that legislation. I understand that this Bill would not be before the House if it were possible for the matter to be taken before the Arbitration Court, which is the usual tribunal to judge these things.

This is an outstanding anomaly and one that should be righted quickly. I would not say that we are not qualified to consider such legislation, because I think

we are competent to do so. We must admire people who are prepared to approach the highest court in the land—that is, the Legislature of the State. When people are prepared to go to the ultimate authority and place their names on a list, they deserve support. I have in my possession a list with quite a number of names on it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are not the only one.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: These people have decided that they want this reform and are sincere enough to go out after it; and I am democratic enough to support them in their efforts. If this matter could get a fair hearing in the Arbitration Court, it would probably right this anomalous wrong that exists.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What is an anomaly?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: This is an anomaly; that this measure should be brought to Parliament instead of going through the Arbitration Court, which is the proper channel.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Why?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: If the hon. member studies the question he will discover the reason for it. We all know there is a lot of interest in this measure because it is one of reform; and as I belong to a party of reform I will, of course, support the Bill. That is why we are here. I am convinced that this would be a most worth-while reform. It would help others to move for better reforms, because I do not think there is any doubt that we in this State drag our feet very badly in that direction. We know that other legislation that has come up here has been consistently opposed over the years; but eventually it has been recognised as good reform, and been accepted.

Accordingly I support the Bill and I hope it will be passed. If it is thrown back on to Section 98 of the Bills of Exchange Act, I trust the anomaly will be looked into and will be the better for the airing it has received in this Parliament. We all know that if members wish, this legislation can be defeated; but even so, I trust it will not be the last we have heard of it. If people have the courage to fight for something, they deserve all the support we can give them.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.20]: It is not a very large bit of paper on which this Bill is printed, but it is apparently large enough to create a considerable amount of interest in the Legislative chambers of this State. I would say at the outset that if the people so concerned with the fate of this Bill were to take an equally active interest in the rest of the doings of the Parliament of Western Australia the State would be a much better place in which to live. Their whole attitude gets

down to the basic one of selfishness. This House or another place is full when something is being discussed that affects the individuals concerned.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That shows they are earnest.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It certainly shows they are earnest in their own self-interest; they are not quite so earnest when it comes to other legislation that is brought before the two Houses of Parliament. I repeat that if these people paid more attention to what was happening in Western Australia, the State would be the better off for it.

We have been given two reasons for the introduction of this measure. First we are told the bank officers want Saturday morning off because some other section of the community has already got that privilege. Secondly, we know that an ex-bank clerk happens to be a member of the Legislative Assembly. Those are the two reasons I can find for the introduction of the measure. In support of the first reason, it is said that the banks and the services and facilities they provide are not much needed on Saturday morning. That might apply to the banks on the Terrace, and possibly others in the city block.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They would be fairly busy.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I said it might apply to those banks; but there is no doubt that it does not apply to the country banks and it certainly does not apply to the suburban banks.

The Minister for Railways: Are they open for late shopping nights?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not talking about late shopping nights, but about banks; and I intend to confine my remarks to that subject as far as possible. I think it has been admitted by the three Labour men who were members of the select committee that in the three country towns they visited, and in which they took evidence—namely, Bunbury, Donnybrook and Harvey—Saturday morning banking business was very extensive. I think that will be found in the speeches they have made and which have been recorded in Hansard. They have admitted that.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: They might be prosperous towns.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If that applies to those three towns then it applies throughout the country areas of Western Australia. From my own observations and discussions with bank people I know that it certainly applies in Geraldton, and I am not too sure that Saturday is not the busiest day of the week.

It seems strange, therefore, that those members of the select committee who admit this fact should say on page 2345 of Hansard No. 3 of 1956 that the banks are

not very much needed on Saturday morning. Surely the two statements are incompatible! In one instance they say that the banks were very much needed in the three places they visited; and then on the other hand, in this Parliament they say that they are not much needed. I find it difficult to reconcile the two statements.

The hon. member responsible for the introduction of this measure also said in a letter to "The West Australian" of Monday, the 2nd November, that—

The convenience of the few who use them for 90 minutes of banking on Saturday is not sufficient reason to deny the bank workers the social justice available to almost everyone else.

Of course, the convenience of the few also happens to be the convenience of the many. I think it is those people who use those facilities on Saturday morning, as well as the bank officers, to whom we have to give consideration.

Another reason advanced for the Saturday morning closing was that it was difficult to get staff; that the quality of the staff was getting lower. Let us take the two points together. I fail to see where the quality of the staff could possibly be any lower than it was in previous years.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You had better qualify that.

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

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would say that the education of our children today is of a much higher standard than it has been in the past. They have been given greater opportunities for education, and travel before they reach the stage where they go into a bank or some other employment. So I think it only right and logical for me to claim that there has been an upward trend in the educational standards of our children; and to say that the quality today is not as good as it was in the past is not altogether correct.

If the banks have found it more difficult to get staff today than they have done in the past from a labour point of view—or from the point of view of those who espouse the cause of Labour—that would be a very good thing. It would mean that there is competition among the firms to obtain staff, and men would not have to chase around looking for employment. If that position did not exist surely we would reach the stage where there was unemployment!

It is a very good thing for banks to be able to compete with other firms and industry in the matter of staff, because it means that the children coming on will be assured of a job instead of being faced with the possibility of being out of employment. If no work on Saturday is to be the criterion for our children

leaving school and seeking employment, then I would say it is a poor look out for the future of Australia.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Why?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is obvious without my having to give the reason. Another reason given for the closing of the banks on Saturday morning is that the service provided by the banks on Saturday could quite easily be given by somebody else. Mention has been made of the savings banks facilities through their respective agencies, and also of the cashing of cheques by business people and hotel-keepers. Again, the matter of armoured escort services was referred to.

From this it would appear that while the bank officers want Saturday morning off they are quite prepared to let somebody else do their job and provide a service that they should be providing on Saturday morning. Many of the savings bank agencies are in shops and are inconvenient to the people who own the shops. They merely do the work as a service to the banks rather than for any gain to themselves; indeed, in some cases they would be better off without the agencies.

If one goes into an area which is starting to build up, and there is a savings bank agency established in a shop, after the business has been built up to a worthwhile degree we find that the banks cut that branch out completely, and build their own establishment. That is how the agencies are treated.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What has that to do with Saturday morning closing?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It has this to do with it: That the banks are not prepared to give this service themselves; but at the same time they have no qualms about letting somebody else provide that service. That is one of the reasons advanced as regards the cheque service. Let us see what would happen if every firm put up a notice similar to that put up by Coles and Woolworths. If one goes into their stores, one will see a notice that no cheques are cashed. What a sorry state of affairs it would be if all business firms adopted that policy!

The Minister for Railways: How many workers use cheques?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Quite a lot.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is not a very good remark coming from the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: I am asking you how many.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A lot of workers are paid by cheque, and I believe the tendency is growing.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They do not have to cash them on a Saturday.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is all the hon. member knows about it.

The PRESIDENT: Order!



Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am afraid these people do not knock around very much on a Saturday when they say that cheques are not cashed much on a Saturday morning.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Not in shops.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would say there are just as many on a Saturday morning as on any other day of the week—even more. The bank officers in the gallery—

The PRESIDENT: I would ask the hon. member to address the Chair and not address his remarks to the gallery.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If we handed over banking services to savings bank agencies, such as shopkeepers and hotelkeepers, and the other service to the armoured escort, I am sure there would be nothing left to banks.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That would be a good job.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The need for their service would be gone. Let us go back to 1949 when this country was in the throes of the bank nationalisation scheme. What did the banks advertise then? What did they say about the private banks in those days, and about the service? Service was the standard upon which they threw out nationalisation. It was what they stood upon; and today they say that bank service is so small it is not worth while giving.

Surely if service was a feature in 1949, we cannot say in 1957 that the service given by banks in the three instances is only a shop window? We cannot have it both ways. If we are not going to get service from the banks, we might as well put up with nationalisation because there will be no need for the banks. The trend today is that the banks do not want to give service; and if nationalisation of banks becomes another issue, I will have to give it a second thought—decidedly so.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: You won't be a lone wolf.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It has been stated on many occasions that we should progress by giving industrial reforms. No doubt it would be very easy for one to stand in the House with a packed gallery and say, "Let us have this reform; let us close the banks on Saturday morning." That would be quite easy, if one did not take cognisance of the effect on the community as a whole. Therefore I have to consider the benefits to one section as against the hindrance to the other section.

Industrial reform has not been introduced into this State or anywhere else without some cost to somebody. If we consider the 40-hour week, which most people claim is progress and reform, we find that nobody yet has been able to assess—I do not think they are ever likely to—the cost to Australia.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: What about the credit side?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: You cannot very well have credit on one side and credit on the other.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan interjected.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know anything about that. But I do know that it did cost Australia a lot of money, and a little observation will prove that. Today we have the spectacle of countries which were war-damaged—war-torn—without an industry in production, but which are now supplying the markets which this country should be supplying and could have been supplying had the 40-hour week never been introduced when it was.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: What about unemployment?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Nonsense!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the hon. member please resume his seat? I refer the hon. member to Standing Order No. 413. Mr. Logan may now proceed.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: In reply to the interjection of Mr. Garrigan in regard to unemployment, I would say that we still have it. The unemployment we have today is a repercussion of the 40-hour week; because had our industries at that time gone into competition as they should have, and built up their trade, unemployment would have been absorbed. In those days our production was stifled, and we never obtained the markets we should have had. That is where industrial reform gets us.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: It won't get you there this time.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please resume his seat? I would draw the hon. member's attention to Standing Order No. 413. Mr. Logan may proceed.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If one examines the conditions and margins of bank officers, one will find that they have been allowed these margins and conditions on account of the fact that they have to work on Saturday mornings. If we asked these bank officers to forgo their margins and accept the industrial conditions of the majority of people who do not work on Saturday mornings, I think there would be a different story. We cannot have it both ways.

I think most people will agree that the conditions of bank officers are quite good, especially when we compare them with those of the people who do not work on Saturday morning. We will find that bank officers are on a far better wicket. Of course, we get down to the parallel of somebody wanting something because somebody else has something. Because my neighbour has a £10,000 house, or a luxury motorcar there is no reason why I should be entitled to either; but that is what the

position looks like to me in this respect. Just because some people do not work on Saturday mornings, the bank officers think they should have them off.

Another aspect of this matter, which not many people give consideration to, is that the leisure time which our workers have is far more costly to them than is their working time. Therefore, the greater the amount of leisure which our workers have, the greater has to be the increase in wages to compensate for it.

Referring to the second reason for the introduction of this measure, it was stated that it was introduced because an ex-bank officer happened to be a member of Parliament. I think that is about the most extraordinary statement I have ever heard as a reason for introducing any measure. Quite recently we dealt with legislation in regard to occupational therapists. If we follow the reasoning which I have just mentioned, we would think that it would have been necessary for the person who introduced the Bill to be an occupational therapist. The same could be said of many other measures.

On the same principle, it could be said that a member of the Perth City Council should have been a member of Parliament to introduce the Bill about the King's Park swimming pool. One is as logical, or as illogical, as the other. For that to be given as a reason for introducing such a measure I consider to be the most extraordinary statement I have ever heard.

I do not want to go over the ground which Mr. Simpson has covered. However, we know that Queensland—with its long years of Labour reign and no Legislative Council—has never introduced such a measure. But if I heard the statement correctly the other day, the bank officers in Victoria and New South Wales, instead of asking for a Saturday morning closing, are asking for a penalty rate for working on Saturday morning.

On that I can perhaps be corrected, but I fancy I heard that statement on the air. I endeavoured to check it in the Press but was unable to verify it. They were not looking for Saturday morning closing, but an overtime payment for Saturday morning work. I believe that in that approach they appreciated the fact that they were giving service and that they were entitled to some payment for the service on Saturday morning.

I am not one of those people who say that the public has to be considered all the time; because, as Mrs. Hutchison said, if a business opened at four in the morning, somebody would be looking for something. However, on this occasion, I think the demand for this service is such that it is a just and reasonable one.

It was suggested by the select committee that wages and salaries could be paid earlier in the week. I do not doubt that such a measure would be practicable, and

there is no reason why it should not be brought into effect. There would be many—particularly casual employees—who could never be paid mid-week. But before we could consider the effect of such a measure, it would have to be introduced. We should not say, "We will close on Saturday morning because perhaps sometime in the future we will pay salaries and wages during the week." That has to be an accomplished fact before we can decide on those lines.

Mention of overdrafts was made by Mr. Simpson, and why the laughter I do not know; because if the bank officers do not appreciate this, I can say that some business people do. To a businessman carrying a fairly large overdraft, Saturday morning closing can, over 12 months, involve a considerable sum. The other day I saw some figures of a firm whose business on Fridays and Saturdays averaged about 37 per cent., but whose takings averaged from 40 to 57 per cent.

When we get a large concern whose takings on the Friday and Saturday amount to 50 per cent., we find that is half its business. Therefore the amount of money it would pay into the bank against the overdraft would be considerable. The firm I am talking about is not a small one, but has many branches throughout the State. If Saturday morning closing were to become an accomplished fact, the amount of money spread around the country in various receptacles must inevitably lead to some people thinking they could find an easy way of living.

The Minister for Railways: They do not seem to go for the Christmas boxes.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I thought that would come up. It has been asked: What happens over Christmas? Well, Christmas occurs once a year; but if the Bill is passed, Saturday morning closing will take place 52 times a year, and not on just one week-end. We have to give consideration to that aspect.

The Minister for Railways: There are plenty of long week-ends.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There are plenty of people looking for an easy living. Fortunately Western Australia has been pretty free of them. But I am perfectly satisfied that gangs of such people do exist; and if they knew that sums of money were lying around the country and could become easy pickings, it would not be long before they wended their way to Western Australia. We are fortunate that distance—isolation, perhaps—has acted as a bar to them; but some of these fellows get desperate at times, and are willing to take all sorts of risks.

Apart from the people who require these facilities on Saturday mornings, there are business executives who require them.

Very often they work on Saturday mornings preparing estimates and making out contracts for clients' signatures. They cannot do this during the week because their staff is working and they have not the time to put into it. This is a banking service which is important to these people; because if they are doubtful about a client, they ring the bank manager to find out whether the fellow is of any substance. I know one man who, the other day, was saved from signing up a £500 contract because he was able to approach his bank on the Saturday morning and get the information he sought.

Only the other day a land agent spoke to me about this measure. He said, "Les, this will affect me considerably. I do a lot of business on Saturday mornings and I need the banks to be open for that business." It has been stated that the period involved is only 1½ hours—90 minutes. Maybe that is so; but we have to remember that the banks are open to the public only 27½ hours a week as it is. Yet we want to take away an hour and a half of that time.

I believe that in the final summing up we have to decide whether those people who require this service on Saturday morning have a just and reasonable case, or whether they can do without it and the bank officers can have their Saturday morning off. I do not doubt that in the long run people would get used to the position if the banks were not open on Saturdays, because they would have to; but I believe it would be inconvenient to a large number of people. I have received a considerable amount of correspondence both for and against the proposition—I would not like to say whether it is 50-50 or otherwise—and one of the letters appears to be lopsided. I believe there are 50 signatures on it.

I have discussed the question with bank officers and bank managers in a friendly manner. They have said, "Les, we know that you have a duty to other people as well as to us. If you can see your way clear to support the Bill, we will be pleased." That is the correct attitude to take. I have also received a letter from a bank officer who opposes the Saturday morning closing. I will not mention his name because the association might think he is a blackleg; but I have the letter in evidence, and I have letters from other officers who have stated the same thing. They have reasoned the question out for themselves.

They say quite openly that the conditions under which they work are such that they are entitled to work on Saturday morning so that they can earn those conditions. I will be frank and say I have seen in this House a letter from some bank officers and this letter was of a threatening nature

and one which I think discredits the officers concerned. But fortunately the letters I have received have been framed in such a manner that one could not take offence.

The majority of the bank officers, I believe, realise that although they consider they have a just claim for the Saturday morning off, we have a responsibility to all sections of the community. In the final decision I have to make up my mind; and I believe that the services of the banks on Saturday morning are required, at the present time, by all those who use them. If the time arrived when the shops—the retail traders—closed on Saturday morning, and when the payment of wages and salaries was made midweek, which would reduce the bank services necessary on Saturdays, then I think I would have no option but to support such a measure. At the moment I must oppose it.

**HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban) [8.54]: With certain reservations I propose to support the second reading of the Bill. In the past few weeks I have received a good deal of correspondence—it seems I am not the only one who has—on the King's Park Olympic pool and on the five-day banking week Bill. Most of the letters I have received from the bank officers—in the main as individuals—have been couched in terms to which I could not offer any objection. They are, as Mr. Logan has said, requesting me to give consideration to supporting the Bill which has been introduced into this House.

However, one letter that I received, was followed up by an apology. I do not propose to quote the letter, but I say quietly and determinedly to the people who wrote it—from a bank in Fremantle—that I do not in any way, shape or form, like to be threatened in connection with legislation. I think it ill becomes people to sign such a letter—those who signed it will know what I am referring to—and send it to me.

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham:** It brings them under the Act.

**Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:** I say quite quietly that I do not like this sort of thing. I think the people concerned were sorry afterwards because they sent me what appears to be an apology.

While I have been sitting here I have been looking through the "Western Australian Banker," and it seems that members of Parliament have received a good deal of notoriety in connection with the Bill. I notice that I have been given special mention with an asterisk after my name, and the suggestion is made that I voted for this measure in 1955 and against it in 1956. I point out that on the 8th December, 1956, I left for a trip overseas, and in conformity with the usual practice I was given a pair, and when this particular piece of legislation was dealt with I was paired.

It must be distressing to people who are interested in this type of legislation to hear references made to the Arbitration Court and to the fact that the Arbitration Court should deal with the matter. It must also be distressing to them to realise the lack of knowledge of the subject that is exhibited by people who make statements of that nature; because the ones who are interested in the measure and who know a great deal more about it than do many other people, are aware that the matter has been to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I said that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: You will remember, Mr. President, that one point of view was that the application should be taken to the Arbitration Court. At this stage it would be informative for members to listen to the judgment given by the President of the Arbitration Court in connection with the matter. He said—

Well, we are all of a clear opinion on this point. I do not think there is any doubt that this court has jurisdiction to fix the hours of employees in banks, even although under the Commonwealth it is, if not legally, practically necessary for banks to keep open on Saturday mornings, and it might be, as Mr. Adams suggests, legally necessary for them to do so. But whereas here it seems certain that any award made by this court of a five-day week would only result in extra overtime being paid, in that the employers would be forced to keep their businesses open despite the court award, we are all agreed that the court, even although technically it may have jurisdiction, would not, except in very special circumstances, make any such order. I think that is as far as I need go.

Therefore the bank officers find themselves in a position that they have to come back to Parliament. But I am displeased and distressed to think that the Government of this State, having this judgment and having knowledge of the fact that this matter was of vital importance to the State, has sought fit to leave the necessary action in the hands of a private member—

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are camouflaging, you know.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —particularly as the private member who introduced it is doing so for political purposes. It is well established that so long as certain members of this Chamber are prepared to vote against this legislation, it will not pass; but it is relatively easy to continue to introduce the Bill year after year. So I would have thought that the Government would have taken a hand in this matter and, had it seen fit, introduced legislation instead of leaving it to a private member to do so.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Would you have agreed to it then?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I say that particularly in view of the fact that the Premier has been asked whether he would take the matter up on a Commonwealth basis with a view to seeing whether uniformity could be introduced in regard to banking hours throughout Australia. His reply to that question was that he would see about that if the legislation in this State were to find its way on to the statute book.

The Minister for Railways: Provided the House passed it, he would submit it to the other States.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It could not have found its way on to the statute book unless the House passed it. This is an attempt by a certain section of the community to gain better working conditions; and there is no harm and nothing wrong with those people writing to their parliamentary representative requesting support for legislation of this nature, any more than there is harm in somebody writing to him and saying that he should vote for an Olympic pool in King's Park.

But the position appears to be a little different from that. Whilst I am sympathetically disposed to bank officers in their desire to improve their conditions and to have a shorter working week, I am alarmed to hear—and I must name the hon. member—Mrs. Hutchison say that she is all for closing the shops on Saturday mornings. That is something which, in the correspondence that I have received and the information that I have gleaned on this matter, the bank officers at least, I am sure, do not have a desire to see happen; because if such a state of affairs did arise, it is possible that the very thing which is feared, so far as Western Australia is concerned, would be an established fact.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is good in Tasmania, anyway.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In the last few weeks the Government of this State has attempted to bring down one piece of legislation after another—some which we have received here and some which is yet to be introduced into this House—of a restrictive nature. It is legislation which tends to tell the private citizen more and more what he will do. It is legislation aimed at directing him in industry and regulating his working conditions and shop hours, and that sort of thing. I look at legislation of that nature with some fear.

The Minister for Railways: To which legislation are you referring?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I cannot discuss the Bills, as the Minister will know.

The Minister for Railways: They are hypothetical, are they not?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They are not hypothetical, and the Minister very well knows to which legislation I am referring. I will give one small example of which the Minister is well aware. There is an attempt to say that a certain section of industry shall start work at 5 o'clock in the morning and not before. Is that hypothetical?

The Minister for Railways: It is logical.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is the type of thing I am referring to. The Government desires to restrict the people in things that they want to do. If a private individual wants to stay awake at night and work 60, 70 or 80 hours a week in order to get on in the world, why should the Government try to restrict him? That is an alarming position.

The Minister for Railways: You are right off the beam.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Great publicity has been given in the Eastern States to the fact that people there are clamouring for longer working hours, longer shop hours, and longer hours of service.

The Minister for Railways: Longer trading hours.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And some are breaking the law.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is a disturbing fact, because, whilst we are a section on our own, we are also one of the States of Australia; and it would be a great pity to see Western Australia taking retrograde steps while other States of Australia were taking steps to lengthen their hours of work.

The Minister for Railways: Of trade.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I believe that the trend in Australia is not that a man should work more than 40 hours a week but that there should be more people working 40 hours a week; and sooner or later we will probably find services being extended to give the public more opportunity of buying things over longer hours, and more freedom rather than restriction of freedom. A man will work 40 hours a week over five days, but the five days need not necessarily be from Monday to Friday.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Bank officers are not asking for more freedom.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know probably better than the hon. member what the bank officers are asking for. On my recent travels overseas I found the state of affairs of which I speak well and truly in operation. One can go into most countries in Europe and make purchases in shops on Sunday mornings. But we know full well what happens in Western Australia if people sell goods on Sunday mornings, or even after certain hours at night. The Factories and Shops Act does not allow them to do so.

The Minister for Railways: Which one would you support? Open hours?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I cannot hear the Minister because he is chewing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He is chewing his cud.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I merely mention these matters because, while I am prepared to assist bank officers who are endeavouring to improve their lot in life by voting for the second reading of this Bill, I think it is only right that I should give members my views on this particular matter and also tell them of the fears I have.

During his speech Mr. Simpson said that a bank might want to open on Saturday mornings to do business but if this legislation became law it would not be able to do so. I do not think that is quite right. As I understand the position, the mere fact that the Bank Holidays Act prescribes a holiday for a certain day does not necessarily prevent a bank from opening on that day if it wants to open. The only thing that a bank holiday does is to provide that certain bills of exchange will not be exchangeable on the day that is promulgated as a holiday.

A good deal has been said about the fact that if this Bill becomes law in Western Australia the Commonwealth Bank and the Rural & Industries Bank might not be obligated by the law; and the judgment of the President of the Arbitration Court lends strength to that argument. I said that I would support this Bill with certain reservations; and I think that if it is to be placed on the statute book, an undertaking must be given by the Commonwealth Bank, and by the Rural & Industries Bank, that they will be bound by it.

The Minister for Railways: We can speak for the Rural & Industries Bank and give you that assurance.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Only while you are there.

The Minister for Railways: Yes; but it will be for a long time.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In addition, we know that travelling facilities are given by banks out of hours, and also that some agency conditions are given out of hours. I think, therefore, that some provision should be made in the Bill that proper agency facilities will be able to be entered into by banks in the event of the Bank Holidays Act being extended to cover Saturday mornings. I think it would be extremely bad for the State of Western Australia if this Bill became law and the banks closed on Saturday mornings within a week or so of the Bill being assented to. Rather than have that state of affairs, I think that the process of closing on Saturday mornings should be a

gradual one. I feel sure that bank employees themselves would appreciate the fact that the public could be put to great inconvenience if the closure were to take place very quickly after the assent to the Bill.

Therefore I think it would be a good idea if we could write into the Bill a provision that in the event of the legislation being assented to the banks would not close on Saturday mornings for a period of six months. With those reservations I support the second reading; but I reiterate that the trade tendencies which are now being felt in the Eastern States will also be felt in Western Australia, but with less success in this State because our present Government has more than an inclination to direct the people as much as it possibly can. With those reservations I support the second reading.

**HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan) [9.15]: Having spoken to a similar Bill previously, I feel I should not leave making my remarks until the Chamber is empty, but should be prepared to give the reasons why I oppose the measure. I would like to make it clear from the outset that I am not opposing the Bill because the bank officers have asked for a five-day week; but that I would oppose it under any conditions, no matter what section of the public might ask for something in similar terms.

My objection is very much the same as that of Mr. Griffith, because I have always opposed any measure which restricted the activities of either individuals or organisations. I have no objection whatever to a State developing a degree of work applying to human endeavour; and I would raise no objection to the Arbitration Court deciding at any time that the economy of a country is such that it can bring in a shorter working week for the members of the community. That side of it is completely divorced from the restrictive attitude toward the activities of individuals and undertakings.

If the Government were to introduce a measure providing exactly what the bank officers are asking for in this case, I would oppose it; but if the Government were to bring in a Bill stating that bank officers shall only work 40 hours over a five-day week, I feel I could support it, particularly if evidence were given that the economy of the country could afford it. Again I say quite emphatically and quite definitely, that as I have opposed everything of this nature before, I must now oppose this Bill on the same ground: that it is restrictive of human endeavour, and that neither this State nor the Australian nation can afford restrictions of this sort.

One member said that we must not put this measure aside lightly. Those of us who are opposing the Bill are not opposing it lightly. Personally I have given

this matter considerable attention—not only since the introduction of this Bill but over a matter of years—because I can see a tendency growing throughout Australia which, in my opinion, is not in the best interests of Australia. If we believe that we can dictate the rate of progress of the rest of the world by legislation, and particularly by legislation in this country for fewer trading hours, then we live in a fool's paradise, because exactly the opposite is taking place in the countries near Australia. They are working at a rate which is phenomenal.

Every step in the reduction of the working hours of an organisation, as apart from an individual, means an increase in cost; and every time that we increase costs in Australia we worsen our position in relation to the rest of the world. We will get to the stage, if we have not already reached it, when export becomes impossible, apart from those items which the world cannot afford not to buy. From our point of view conditions can become extremely difficult.

I would like to address some remarks to the members of this House, realising that there is an audience of individuals who, in their occupation, have always been among the favoured members of the community. They have always earned and deserved the respect of the community. The bank manager in any community has always gained respect; and sheerly through his position, has been given respect by the community.

They are a people of more than average education, and they are a people who should look in their endeavours to the future of Australia and who should judge their conduct accordingly. I believe that throughout the years they have done so. It is because I respect them, and because the community respects them, that I speak as I do. I want to tell them the time has arrived in Australia when work is becoming essential; when human endeavour on our part has to be greater than it has been in the past; when we have to give consideration to maintaining our position relative to those countries around us.

I am going to record an incident that happened on a recent journey which my wife and I took through south-east Asian countries. When we approached the port of Yokkaichi, one of the southern ports of Japan, a lot of our wool was unloaded. We left and went overland to pick up the ship later in the day at the city of Nagoya.

That evening I was invited into the captain's cabin, and we were discussing our first contact with Japan. His remarks to me were that he felt it would not be very long—because of the high costs of freight charges of Australia and Australian ships—before Japan would be sending its own ships to Australia to gather the wool that it was buying from us.

That was less than two months ago; and now we find an announcement has been made that Japan is sending a fleet which I should think would be four vessels, because they will come here once a month. We are going to lose from the shipping aspect, because our freight charges are too high.

The Minister for Railways: Overseas freight charges.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: When we got to Manila we saw loaded godowns full of American condensed milk and American dairy products, and I could not see any storage of Australian products in the Manila godowns. In discussion with a business man, I was told that we could not compete in the market as our costs were too high. We found the same position in the islands of British North Borneo and the ports of North Borneo; that our costs were so high that other people were able to sell their goods rather than we.

The Minister for Railways: Others have dollars, too.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: One can make all sorts of excuses for the position. But what I am stating is true: that all this endeavour by us in Australia to achieve ease and luxury can one day rebound very severely upon every one of us in this wonderful country.

I do not know whether members read a leading article in the "Singapore Times"—I am not sure of the name of the paper—after the visit of Mr. McEwen. It pointed out that Australia had a difficult task in exporting for the simple reason that so many of the older countries had products to sell which had been tried and proved, and we in Australia would have to maintain a standard equivalent to that if we wanted to sell. If we wanted to sell cheap inferior goods we had the cheap competitor of Japan, who sold cheaply.

Therefore our difficulties can become very great if we, as Australians, continue to ask for more ease and luxury and fewer working hours, as well as curtailing hours of trade. It is a serious position; and I would ask all thinking people to give earnest consideration to where we are heading. In regard to our dairy products, I learned that our market had gone to India. However, I was told—as I was told by one person here who knows that industry very well—that that would not last very long with the prices we had to charge.

That makes this request by an organisation to limit trade a very difficult one for me to agree to. I know I will offend some people, and I know I will please others. I cannot help it. I have a principle in which I believe, and I must adhere to it, no matter what happens to me personally. If I lost an election tomorrow by voting against this measure—as I am going to do—I would still feel happy that I had voted according to what I believed

to be the interests of this great country. No one succeeds without working, and the individual who succeeds is the person who does a bit more after the 40-hour week is up. Many people in the world have risen to great heights by working long hours, and sometimes under very difficult conditions, which they weathered, and ascended the ladder.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: As a doctor you should know the toll it takes.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I do not think that work killed anybody. I think frustration kills people; and we could be heading for frustration in this country at a very great rate, especially if we are going to curtail the efforts of individuals and take away from them the right to succeed.

When we look at this possible rising of costs, or this inevitable rising of costs, as we restrict activities, we know what is going to happen in this State where we have a quarter of the unemployed in Australia while our population only represents 1/13th or 1/14th of the population of Australia.

I believe that by extending the hours of trade we could possibly provide occupation for more people. As Mr. Griffith pointed out, wherever we went we saw that hours of trading had been extended. This applied in almost every country we visited. It was possible to extend one's shopping hours into the evening, and in certain places to go shopping on Sundays.

I am only instancing this extension to make members realise that the rest of the world considers this is the way to keep people employed—to spread the money which, after all, is only wealth so long as it is circulating—and to keep the wealth circulating amongst the people and give occupation to the greatest number.

It is not essential that a person should work long hours; because with the staggered hours and the longer trading hours, more people are being employed as part-time shop assistants. Many individuals would be only too pleased to accept short working hours to add something in the way of emolument to their weekly wage. We saw numbers of married women without large family responsibilities who were earning something by offering their services for part-time work.

Even in the Eastern States one sees this tendency to spread the hours. It is interesting to note that in New South Wales the Government, in order to make it easier for people, has opened the central lotteries office for the sale of lottery tickets at 8.15 a.m.; and I understand the banks—possibly the savings bank branches—are opening at 8.30 a.m. and finding the business profitable.

Even in Melbourne one sees the reaction to this restriction in trade by the endeavours of individuals to bring to the

notice of the Government the public desire for extended business hours. I conclude, because much could be said in the same strain, by saying quite frankly that my only objection to the Bill is that it is restrictive on an organisation; and if we adopt that restrictive attitude, I consider we will restrict the individual—we have seen it already this session—and by so doing endanger the future of the individuals of this country.

I am not opposing the Bill lightly because I know it is purely a political measure to gain a platform which, I believe, is against the interests of the country.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Rot!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is not fair to attack the platform, apparently. Well, let me give something in the way of proof. When the Shop Assistants' Union was discussing Friday night shopping, a reputable citizen in the city, who was associated with the negotiations, told me that it was made quite plain that the desire for Friday night shopping was the first step in an attempt to close on Saturday morning; and the shop assistants having gained the right to close on Saturday morning would then close on Friday night because the platform was for a five-day week; which has been recited behind me this evening as the platform here.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There is nothing wrong in that.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I oppose the Bill because I think it would be a great disaster to Australia. I believe there are people who have come here this evening who will think as I do—that the interests of this great country of ours must be placed first, and then considerations of individual ease, luxury and selfish desires. I have any quantity of selfish desires and I would like to have ease and luxury, too. The time may come, when I am old enough, for me to give up work; but whilst I feel I can be of use to people, I must continue. When people no longer feel I can be of use to them, I will give up; but not until then.

I hope I have said enough to make some of the people who are listening to me this evening believe that we should so order our activities within Australia and our relations with other lands that this country will belong to our children and their heirs.

**HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [9.36]: I wish to follow up some of the remarks made by Mr. Logan when he referred to the fact that the only time much interest was taken by the public in the doings of Parliament, in either House, was when legislation affecting, personally, some section of the people, was being considered. It appears to me that national responsibility in a large number of our people has disappeared altogether, and that is one phase I put forward on the Bill.

Like Dr. Hislop, I believe that a measure of this nature is far from being in the best interests of Australia. The responsibility for a move of this type, instead of coming either from our State or our Federal Government, comes from where? From a private member who was once a bank employee.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What is wrong with that?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I made the statement, and it is correct. What is the aim of that member in introducing the Bill? Is it one of national interest; one of interest to Western Australia; or is it to gain personal kudos? I leave that to the judgment of members.

The Minister for Railways: What do you introduce anything for?

Hon. E. M. Davies: Use your own tape measure.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We have a country where the living conditions are second to none in the world. I do not think anyone here can deny that.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is not your fault that they are.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: When the hon. member says it is not my fault that the standard of living in this country is second to none in the world, I resent it. Our conditions are second to none because we have a good country which has been built up by people who worked and did not quibble about a Saturday morning off; and the hon. member knows that very well. When I was a young chap and first started work, I commenced with the massive sum of 12s. 11d. a week, and I worked from 8.30 in the morning until 6 o'clock at night, and from 8.30 until one o'clock on Saturdays. In those days no thought was given to having Saturday morning off.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You want to improve that, don't you?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It depends on what the hon. member calls improvement. Is it improvement for personal benefit, or does she want improvement for the benefit of our country?

As Dr. Hislop has said we have, next door to us, Asia and Japan. Do the people of those countries think about not working on Saturdays? No! Take war-stricken Germany and the people of England who have gone through times we have never experienced. Have they got our standard of living? They most certainly have not. But they keep their noses to the grindstone and they have worked to rehabilitate the nations.

We have been very fortunate in Australia, and since the end of the last world war have had for sale on the world's markets goods such as wheat and wool that have been in demand. Had it not been for those commodities, the



production of which has been built up in this country through hard work and long hours, where would this country have been today and where would its working men have been? They would not have had their present standard of living and, in fact, none of us would have had it.

Surely those in responsible positions, as bank officers are, should give a lead to the other workers in this country instead of asking for fewer hours of work! In spite of the assertion that a five-day week for banks would not mean shorter working hours, that is hard to believe, because once they achieve a five-day week, the shorter working hours will naturally follow. We have heard it said that there is not much business done in banks on Saturday mornings in either the city or the country.

Perhaps one could agree to a certain extent that there is not quite as much business done on Saturday morning in some banks as in others, but every bit of business done in a bank on a Saturday is a gain to the country. We have heard it said that the armoured car escort could handle the business done by banks on Saturday mornings, and that statement was made in the report of the select committee. The owner of the armoured car escort in this State is a friend of mine, and I know that his hours of work are not short. He has to supervise his business personally and he works until late in the evening and all day Saturday—

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Yes, at the races.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: At the races and at the trots on Saturday night. It is part and parcel of his business. He has admitted to me that the larger his business becomes, the more difficult it is to control; and he has to supervise it personally. His responsibility is so great and the amount of money he has to handle is so large that he cannot leave it to his employees the whole time. He has to build up a work force to do the Saturday business which the bank employees do not wish to do, and must take the risks of the business in handing personal supervision over to somebody else. It is not as easy as it looks on the surface, and I think that is the answer to one of the arguments put forward in favour of the Bill.

The sooner our people realise that work and only work will place us in a position to trade in competition with other nations of the world and that only work and the keeping of our costs down to a minimum will allow us to succeed as a nation, the better. If, within a few years, the bottom were to fall out of the market for wheat, and wool and prices decreased, there would be a different tune sung by the people who now want a five-day week and shorter working hours. It has been proved in this State that shorter working hours have not reduced the cost of production

but have increased it, and only the fact that since the last war for a considerable period there was a shortage of employees, allowed the people of this State to enjoy a situation in which they could do as little work as they wished and draw the highest pay they could get.

That state of affairs cannot continue and many people who today—particularly the younger people who never went through the depression—have a big awakening ahead of them if they believe they can live the rest of their lives under bountiful conditions, such as exist today. I am not a pessimist, but we have maintained a standard of living since World War II which cannot be maintained forever. There is an old saying that chickens will come home to roost, and I leave those comments with members who perhaps have not given the measure the close consideration it should receive in the best interests of this country, but who have rather looked on the Bill as a question to be considered from the point of view of one section of the community only, quite divorced from the repercussions it may have. For those reasons I oppose the second reading.

#### THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [9.46]: When a similar measure was previously before this House I supported it, and I intend to support this one. Much has been said about the effect of banking on the national economy and the results if banking facilities were not available on Saturday mornings—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is the example they set, is it not?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have heard a lot about the repercussions of discontinuing Saturday morning banking, allegations that the standard of living would fall and that our products would not be able to compete overseas if banks did not open on Saturday mornings, but those arguments have no foundation. It has been said that the bank officers do not want to give service on Saturday mornings, but I do not think that is so. I think that most of them feel that they do so little now on Saturday mornings that this request is reasonable.

Hon. F. D. Willmott: I do not think that is so.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member can express his own thoughts on the matter later. In the North-West, which represents one-third of the land area of this State and where there are large financial interests, because it is a very wealthy portion of the State—although it is from 75 to 80 per cent. desert—there are few banking facilities.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: But they do not use money up there, do they?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** They manage quite well with no banks at all in some places. It is only in the last few years that there has been a trading bank in Derby, which is a very important place. There is no trading bank in Wyndham and it was only in recent years that a trading bank was removed from Marble Bar to Port Hedland, yet none of those towns has collapsed. None of the pastoralists bolted from their properties; nobody closed up, and all the business has been carried on as usual.

It has been said that the hours of trading have been extended in the Eastern States, and we have read about it in the Press. For many years there have been extended trading hours in country towns; but the banks do not open. Not long ago I went to that famous place called Cadoux and I stayed that Saturday night at Dowerin.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: They had a tape recorder there.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** It is a pity I had not taken a camera with me and photographed Dowerin because the place was an absolute beehive that evening.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That was because they knew you were there.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** No banks were open; but every shop in the town was open, and there was nowhere to park. I do not see how trading suffered in any way simply because the banks in the town were closed. They closed at their regular hour on Saturday morning. There has been a lot of assumption about what will happen if the banks close on Saturday mornings and what effect it will have on the economy of the nation. I do not believe it will have any effect. Banks have always had short hours of trading and the normal trading hours for the general public are restricted at present. I do not know what will happen this Christmas, for instance. This year Christmas Day falls on a Wednesday. The banks will close on Thursday for sure; but will they open on Friday and Saturday morning or will they close right through to the following Tuesday?

Hon. F. D. Willmott: Nobody has any money to put in them at that time of the year.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** If they follow the general practice, the Associated Banks will say, "We will have a week off" and it will not worry them at all.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You are giving them advice now because you have a gallery.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** They will not be worried if our dairy products are not sold in Manila over that period, or over any other long week-end. I cannot

see how the closing of the banks on Saturday morning—1½ hours of trading—will ruin the finances of the country.

It is suggested over and over again that the standard of living in Western Australia is getting so high that we will find difficulty in selling our products. The same sort of thing was said before we had the Harvester award or before any of this restrictive legislation which Labour Governments have brought in curtailing the hours of work. That has always been the argument. The same thing was said when a 48-hour week was suggested—it would ruin the country. The same thing applied to the 44-hour week and the 40-hour week. It was the same old story; but it does not work out in practice because the standard of living of the people in Australia is, I would say, the highest in the world.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Only because of wool.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** There are wheat and wool.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Is there no such thing as a saturation point?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** This morning I visited a shop where they are making diesel railcars under the Colombo Plan. I was told that firm is able to tender more than favourably with most European countries and more than favourably with the Americans. Those railcars are made in Western Australia and the steel has to be brought from the Eastern States.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Did not your Government send to London for some of these railcars?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Your Government did.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No, your Government.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** No, it was your Government, but we are paying for them.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Order! I must ask the Minister to address the Chair.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Unfortunately, members will persist in interjecting and it is very hard.

**THE PRESIDENT:** I realise that.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister never interjects!

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** It is for those reasons that I supported the measure last year; and I intend to support it again. Many members have said, "Why should an ex-bank officer introduce this Bill?" Why should he not introduce it if representations are made to him to do so? The Labour Party might have different views to other parties when it is in Government, but if somebody comes along with a bright idea and wants

to submit his ideas to Parliament, the Labour Government does not want to grab the credit for it.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you waited for this Government to get any bright ideas, you would be waiting for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If a member comes along with a progressive idea, he is entitled to get any of the benefits which might arise from it, the same as any other member who introduces legislation into this Chamber or to another place. I trust that members will give careful consideration to this legislation. Let them ask themselves what happens in remote areas where no banking facilities have ever been provided. How does business carry on in those places? Let country members have a look at their own country towns. Where there is a late shopping night, the banks are never open; but business still carries on.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, they are open.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What would happen in Perth if there was no Saturday morning banking? Let members have a look what happens on the Mondays that banks are closed. Everything goes along just the same. It has been suggested that all the burglars in Australia will come to Western Australia if the banks close on Saturday mornings.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We have our fair share now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is a ridiculous statement because large sums of money are held now. I do not know where they are held; but over long week-ends and over the Christmas holidays hotels and big business concerns have large takings. That money is protected and the people get along all right. A lot of argument which has been submitted against this measure will not carry much weight when it is analysed. I support the Bill.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [9.58]: Some people always look askance at any type of reform, and we all fear what tomorrow will bring. We claim to be modern and we like it to be said that we move with the times. But if a move is made to alter something that has been in operation for over 50 years, it always seems to be resisted. I can remember when there was Friday night shopping in Perth, and the arguments used against the discontinuance of that late shopping were the same as those which have been used against the closing of the banks on Saturday morning.

I can remember also when the shops on the Goldfields opened on Saturday afternoons. When it was suggested that that service should cease and that shop workers should not work on Saturday afternoons, people said that it would be ruinous; they

said that people would not be able to get their goods and that the poor old prospector and the man in the bush would never be able to buy his clothing or week-end food. But Saturday night and Saturday afternoon shopping in country districts has ceased and we have almost forgotten that it ever existed. Now when it is suggested that the banks should close on Saturday mornings people say what a dreadful thing it is. But what really happens?

The banks are only open for 90 minutes, and by the time the adjustments are made and the papers are got out in the morning, and by the time the papers are gathered together again and put away, a good bit of the morning is wasted, which could otherwise be put to better use. The banks close at 11 o'clock. I should say that businessmen who wish to deposit any money they might have, would have to start settling their affairs somewhere about 10 o'clock. They would have to make up their pay-in slips and accordingly would only be able to do business up to about 10.30.

But what becomes of the money they receive between 10.30 and 12 o'clock? Up to the present, they have made some other arrangement for safekeeping. We do not know what that arrangement is, but apparently it has been quite satisfactory, because the burglaries that we read about are very few. The position, therefore, must look after itself.

It has been said by previous speakers that there are various bank holidays in the year, but I have not heard it mentioned that a bank holiday should not be held on Monday. If a bank holiday falls on a Monday it is held on a Monday, and I would say that that should be the day on which the bank should do its best business, after the trading of the week-end. This whole business would look after itself if left alone. It has also been said that with this curtailment of hours and days of work, it is possible that unemployment might be created.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Who said that?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I heard an hon. member who sits not very far from me speaking along those lines. Is no cognisance to be taken of the progress we have made? Members are fully aware that automation has been introduced; and indeed I inspected a machine in the Railways accounts office recently which was supposed to be doing the work of 20 or 40 clerks. I watched that machine calculating in decimals; I watched it calculating time, overtime and penalty rates. It also worked out the taxation deductions for a wife and two children, and its working was most accurate. Surely we have progressed and surely this has made some difference!

Let us consider another aspect altogether—that of road work and the operation of the bulldozer, the front end loader, the mechanical shovel, and so on. Have they not displaced 40, 50, 60, even 80 men in one sweep? Have we not made any advance at all? If we are concerned about large amounts of money held over from race-meetings, etc., have we not such things as safe deposits? I have been connected with many functions and gatherings such as race-meetings, etc., that have been held on Saturday afternoons, and I have not known there to be any difficulty because the banks were not open to receive the money. Some method was found for its safe keeping.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We even put it in the police cell one night.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: There is always a way to work these things out. I worked in the Civil Service years ago, and so did quite a few other members in this Chamber, and I know that the half-holiday on Saturday was considered a great privilege. We all use our leisure time profitably. We who have enjoyed a Saturday morning off for the past 25 years or so, should not deny that privilege to others; particularly to a small section of the community whose services it has been proved are not altogether necessary on that morning. For the reasons I have outlined I support the second reading of this Bill.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [10.5]: I supported this measure on a previous occasion and I intend to do so again. I heard Mr. Baxter say that at one time he worked for about 11s. a week. I would point out that in my first job in 1905 I got 5s. a week, and I worked pretty hard for it from 7.30 to 5 p.m. We worked seven days a week. Our starting time on the mines was 8 a.m., and we finished at 4 p.m.; and, during that time, there were three shifts.

We have come a long way since then; and this has been brought about by the great Labour movement, and by the unions endeavouring to secure a decent standard of living and decent working hours for the people. That is how it is possible for the hon. member to have shorter hours and better conditions at the moment.

When I was a member of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council I moved for a 40-hour week. The rest of the council thought it was a dreadful step to take; they thought they would never get through the work, and there would be a loss of revenue. We found, however, that there was no loss of revenue, and that we got through the same amount of work in 40 hours as we had got through in 48 hours. We want progress, and this is the only way to get it—by bringing about a shorter working week and providing the people with some benefit as a result of it.

At present the bank officials work a 40-hour week, and I think they work 1½ hours on Saturday morning. In Kalgoorlie I think the banks are open from 9.30 to 11.30 a.m., which is two hours. If the people in Merredin and similar places are provided with a long week-end it will enable them to come down to the city and enjoy the benefits provided for them. At the moment only the city people are able to take advantage of those conditions.

I heard mention of foreign countries, and I would like to say at once that we do not want to bring ourselves down to their standard of living; we want to improve our standard of living and by doing so set them an example to follow.

I think it is well known that there are boxes in the banks which can be used for depositing money, particularly if they happen to be large amounts. On the Goldfields the manager of the bank has even accommodated us to the extent of returning to the bank to put our money in safe deposit until the following Monday. For those reasons I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. L. C. Diver, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS**  
(Hon. H. C. Strickland—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.*