

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot question or discuss the Worker's Homes Board. No money is provided for workers' homes from Consolidated Revenue, and therefore that matter cannot be discussed at this juncture.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is remarkable that certain sums of money are provided to pay for salaries, telephones, postages, stationery and a multiplicity of other details, and at the foot of the statement there is shown a net increase of £855. Surely this money must be provided previous to collection! Surely the Treasurer must approve of those figures!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot proceed to discuss this vote. I have already informed members of that. The hon. member may take an opportunity to discuss the matter at a later stage, but he cannot do so now.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well, I will bow to your ruling, though it appears to be extraordinary.

Vote—Superannuation Board, £2,270:

Mr. McDONALD: How far does the Premier propose to proceed with the Estimates to-night?

The Premier: Only to the end of the Treasurer's departments.

Mr. McDONALD: With the member for North-East Fremantle, I should have liked to say something about workers' homes. I was waiting for the opportunity.

Mr. Needham: And other members, too.

Mr. McDONALD: Will the Premier report progress after this vote has been dealt with?

The Premier: At the end of the Treasury departments.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £635,311—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 17th October, 1939.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Profiteering Prevention Bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

Hon. J. Cornell and the Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.35]: Under Standing Orders 383 and 385 I wish to make a personal explanation. In the course of my remarks upon the Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill I inferred that to-day internal combustion engines, 16 inches in diameter or under, were not subject to inspection, and that it was proposed to reduce the size to 12 inches in diameter. What I meant to say, and should have said, was that irrespective of the size of the cylinders, those engines were subject to inspection to-day, but that it was not necessary for a man to have an engine-driver's certificate to drive an internal combustion engine of 16 inches in diameter or less, and that the Bill proposed that an engine-driver's certificate should start in connection with the 12 inch diameter instead of 16 inch as heretofore.

Hon. C. F. Baxter and the Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.37]: I, too, wish to make a personal explanation. The debate on the Inspection of Machinery

Act Amendment Bill appears to have been somewhat heated, and the atmosphere of controversy was such that on looking through the report of my speech, I noticed that when referring to an explosion that occurred I mentioned the word "Bunbury" when I should have used the word "Albany". I do not think I would have missed that error but for the fact that an explosion did occur at Bunbury. I have, however, no knowledge of the Bunbury incident, but I have a full knowledge of what occurred at Albany. I am also sorry to say that some branches of Government departments are not entirely broadminded when dealing with Bills that are before the Legislature. When a Bill is brought down and the advice of Government departments is sought, it is the duty of those departments to be entirely impartial.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that remark comes within the range of a personal explanation.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I merely rose to explain that when I spoke about an explosion having occurred in connection with machinery at Bunbury, and when I stated that such machinery had not been subject to inspection, I really meant to apply those remarks to the incident at Albany, that being in an altogether different category.

QUESTION—WAR WITH GERMANY.

Enlisters' Superannuation Contributions.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: As the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act makes no provision to exempt from payment of contributions those who enlist for active service—1, Does the Government intend by legislation to meet the position? or 2, Does it intend to safeguard the payment of such contributions during the period these persons are engaged on active service?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, With regard to employees called up for home defence the Government has already announced that it will pay the superannuation fund contributions during the period of leave without pay when civil pay is not made good. It is expected that the position of employees enlisting for active service will be dealt with by all Governments on a uniform basis, but a decision has not yet been reached.

MOTION—RAILWAYS, GOODS RATES BOOK.

To Disallow By-law.

Debate resumed from the 12th October on the following motion by Hon. A. Thomson (South-East):—

That Railway By-law No. 55—Goods Rates Book—dated the 1st March, 1935, made under the heading of the Western Australian Government Railways, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 29th September, 1939, and laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd October, 1939, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [4.42]: I support the motion. Not long ago the Railway Department was given a splendid opportunity to convert the railways into a payable concern. Certainly for a year or two the financial return was satisfactory, but we know what the position has been during the past 12 months. The opportunity to effect the change I have indicated was afforded by the passing of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. Prior to that legislation being enacted, much of the transportation of goods throughout the State was effected by means of motor trucks, but subsequently those operations were limited to a great extent. Once the Act was passed and motor transport was, to a large extent, put off the roads, the resultant effect was much to the disadvantage of people in the rural areas. Under the changed conditions we expected improved accommodation, increased speed and additional comforts for passengers, but no such advantages have been enjoyed by those who use the railways. The passing of the State Transport Co-ordination Act has had practically no effect from that standpoint. Fares have not been reduced; passengers are not allowed the advantage of return fares, and all sorts of things have happened that were quite unexpected. To sum up the position, the country people have gained no advantage under the changed conditions. Now we find that a by-law has been gazetted as the result of which freights have been increased. For that reason I hope the motion will be carried and the by-law disallowed. The country people are least able to carry increased burdens such as are imposed by the by-law. The people in the metropolitan-suburban area will hardly be affected. In addition to the farmers, who will be particularly concerned in the increased freights, those residing in

goldfields centres such as Kalgoorlie and Boulder will also be adversely affected. The increases involve added charges of upwards of 20 per cent., which figure represents a big item in respect of small parcels consigned over the railways. One unfortunate aspect is that the increases largely affect freights on foodstuffs, which must tend to increase the cost of living. I hope the by-law will be disallowed.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.45]: I shall give members a few reasons why I intend to support the motion. When the Chief Secretary replied to Mr. Thomson's speech, he said the increased freights were occasioned by the added wages bill consequent upon advances in the basic wage. If that be so, why select the country people to shoulder the burden instead of increasing railway fares in the metropolitan-suburban area? It seems to me that the country people are always selected for harsh treatment. I supported the State Transport Co-ordination Act because I thought the position as between the railways and motor transport should be co-ordinated. Prior to that legislation being enacted, large consignments were conveyed from Perth by road, and by that means a cwt. of goods, which might comprise 20 parcels, cost only 4s. When members appreciate the fact that such goods consigned by rail would be charged for parcel by parcel, and when despatched as I have indicated by road, the goods were collected from the various warehouses in Perth and landed at the country centres for the one cost, they will recognise the advantage of the latter system. It did not matter what the individual parcels were or where they came from; they were delivered under satisfactory conditions. In Perth motor trucks were permitted, without any extra charge, to collect goods at the ships' sides and convey them to warehouses in Perth. If the country people are to be loaded with extra costs merely because the basic wage has been increased, the action will be most unfair to the primary producers. When journeying to the city by train this morning, I was informed by a man that the cost of transport of eggs, under the new by-law, had been doubled. I have only his word for that statement.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A consignment of eggs is very fragile.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: That makes no difference. An increase of 100 per cent. in

freight on eggs naturally interferes with the value of the producer's output.

Hon. L. Craig: Are you sure that statement is correct? The Minister said the maximum increase was 65 per cent.

The Chief Secretary: I think the hon. member should make inquiries before repeating such a statement.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The man informed me that he had sent a consignment of eggs from Brookton last week. I have not had an opportunity to check the statement.

Hon. L. Craig: It sounds to me like a mistake.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, not altogether. Transport costs have increased. The Minister said that the maximum increase in freight was 65 per cent.; the producer said the freight on his eggs had been doubled. Even if the increase is 65 per cent., the added impost is a heavy one to be borne by the producers of eggs in the country districts.

Hon. L. Craig: I wanted to check your statement with that of the Minister, that is all.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: At Quindanning on Friday night last, I attended a meeting to discuss a report presented by a deputation that had waited on the chairman of the Transport Board regarding the wool position and freights on the return journey from Perth. Under the motor transport system, goods were delivered to the settlers at Quindanning under advantageous circumstances. Consignments were delivered on the farm up to 28 lbs. in weight for a charge of 9d., which represents an exceptionally low rate.

Hon. A. Thomson: By road?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. Those goods were delivered to the individual farms and not at the railway station, which would mean that other transport would have to be availed of to convey the goods to the farm. Why cannot such matters be co-ordinated? Why are the country people always penalised? I have no option but to support the motion moved by Mr. Thomson.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.50]: I feel in a quandary regarding the manner in which I should record my vote on the motion. Assuming that the by-law is disallowed, what is the alternative? The railways cannot continue to function as at present. They are being carried on at a great loss per annum and, unfortunately, I think that the ratio of loss in the future

will be maintained. The framing of this by-law is the Commissioner's way of endeavouring to obtain more revenue. If he is denied this opportunity, where will the extra revenue come from? Members who have previously spoken on the motion have protested that the impost is being placed solely on the primary producers. Nothing of the sort. Mr. Seddon, who is an old railway man and knows the ropes, has just informed me that if any part of the community will be affected it will be the people he and I represent.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is not so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The fact remains that whatever the price at which, say, eggs are landed at Boulder or Norseman, the residents of those places have to pay it. Those people have to bear the added cost.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Not necessarily the extra freight.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The residents of those places will pay the added cost. If extra freights are charged they will be the people to pay it in the long run.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: The cost cannot be passed on.

Hon. J. CORNELL: For the last 25 years I have maintained and still maintain—and Mr. Drew will bear me out in this—that the goldfields have meant a great deal to the Railway Department because it is to the goldfields that a large proportion of the goods upon which the higher freights are charged have been sent. A quarter of a century ago you, Mr. President, and I and the late Mr. Harris and Mr. Seddon too, endeavoured to get a sectional return on the railway system of the State, but did not succeed. It was always denied us. The goldfields have carried the agricultural parts of the State on their back for the last 30 or 40 years.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: What about the timber industry? That has carried a bit of the burden?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The timber industry has carried nothing in comparison with what has been borne by the consuming population of the goldfields. What is the cause of the decline in the railway revenue to such a large degree? It is not entirely increases in the basic wage. Any one who, during the last four years has watched, week by week, the timber, machinery and a hundred and one mining requisites that have gone from Perth to new

mining areas, must have perceived that a decline in the original capacity of the Railway Department to furnish good returns was inevitable. Practically all the new plants have been installed and consequently that source of revenue to the department has vanished. However, the consuming population on the goldfields is larger than it has been for the last 30 years. One has only to consider that portion of the goldfields embraced by the Province represented by Mr. E. H. Hall—I refer to Wiluna—and remember what was carried over that part of the line that was in existence before Wiluna became an important centre, to agree that the mainstay of the railway system is the goldfields consuming population. Whether we like it or not, if this by-law is disallowed we shall not meet the loss of £55,000 that the by-law is designed to prevent. The community will be compelled to find the money or the interest on the money. So we have to ask ourselves whether we shall give the Commissioner some support in his endeavour to even up the railway finances by an increase in the freight on goods, or whether we shall say to him, "No, you cannot have our support, but you can fall into debt." If a loss is made, the collective community of the State will have to meet it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commissioner employed 630 additional men last year.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is another phase of the matter. The Commissioner's alternative to increasing freight charges would probably be to reduce the working personnel of the railways. What would be the good of that? Suppose, for argument's sake, that the Commissioner dismissed 150 men to-morrow. We have reached the stage when the State has to keep men who are not in employment or find money to provide them with work. So there will not be any fundamental difference in the expenditure of money, whether men are engaged on the railways or not, because they will still look to the Government for assistance. The situation is serious and each year it must become more acute, because of the advent and rapid development of mechanised transport. If I go to an agricultural show or a football match, or any other form of sport, I notice acres upon acres of motor cars parked around the grounds. We cannot have it both ways; it must be either a railway system or a mechanised transport system. In either case we

must pay through the nose. However we may argue in favour of mechanised transport, I have yet to learn that the community of Western Australia is within 50 years of doing away with the railway system. In the circumstances I intend to vote for the retention of the by-law because it is a direct attempt—not an around the corner attempt—to improve the finances of the railways. I do prefer the direct way rather than the indirect way of imposing taxation. The indirect way, as I have said, is that the community has to find the money so as not to be aware that it is paying taxation while in the direct way the people who use the utility are definitely made aware that they are paying. I wish to heaven there was a lot more direct taxation; then the people would think more deeply and take more interest in public affairs.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.3]: I have never heard Mr. Cornell advance more flimsy arguments than we have heard in support of the retention of the by-law. Mr. Thomson wishes to have disallowed. First of all the hon. member spoke about our preventing men from being put off their employment, and then he stated that an increase such as is proposed by the by-law must be passed. At whose expense must it be passed?

Hon. J. Cornell: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I must have misunderstood the hon. member. Mr. Holmes interjected that there were more men employed on the railways this year than were employed last year, and I understood Mr. Cornell to say that if we put men off we should have to keep them just the same.

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes, that is what I said.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Then I understood the hon. member to say that we should agree to the increased freights so that those men might be kept at work. I ask, at whose expense? and I repeat the question and declare that it should be broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the State. At whose expense? I am not going to do as the hon. member did, namely, draw a parallel between the primary producer and the man on the goldfields or in the city. I have no intention of taking up that attitude; all are the same to me, whether they live on the goldfields or in the agricul-

tural areas, and all have to work for a living. The House should take a determined stand on a question such as this, because it has continued far too long—I refer to the heaping of burdens on the people outback. Once we leave the metropolitan area, then our difficulties begin. How long is this to last, I wonder? Public men, and particularly those in charge of the affairs of State—I am not especially referring to those at the helm at the present time—right through the years that are past and ever since I was a boy, those in authority have lamented the fact that the masses live in the cities. All asked, “Why do not the people go out into the country?” The concentration of the people around the metropolitan area has not been peculiar to this State, but it has obtained throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Has not our legislation tended to the congregation of the people in and around the metropolis? Why? Because Parliaments have been so short-sighted as to deny the people their just rights. At a time like this when everyone is being asked to carry on business as usual, the people outback are further penalised. There is only one just method of overtaking the leeway, and that is by making the general taxpayer responsible for the additional payments. Any idea of further penalising the people in the country, whether they be workers in the agricultural districts or on the goldfields, is not right, particularly in view of what they have gone through in recent years. We are grateful to those who have migrated from the city to seek employment at places like Wiluna, Big Bell, and Youanmi, and now we propose that for every commodity they require they must pay something additional. How can it be said that the extra impost will apply to the primary producer only; it must apply to every man and woman living outside the metropolitan area. The proposal is monstrous, especially when we should do our utmost to induce the people in the country to remain there. Who is it, I ask, that supports the people in the metropolitan area? When I was a civil servant and came to the city on annual leave, I used to wonder, and I still wonder, how the thousands of people in the metropolis managed to earn a good living here. I used to ask “Where do they get their means; how do they acquire their

wealth?" If we walk around any of the suburbs we find not dozens of houses, but hundreds of them, all of beautiful design, comfortable in appearance and with gardens and lawns. (One marvels where the money comes from. Is it not all coming from the workers who are being asked to pay these additional railway rates? Let us make no mistake about it. We now propose to penalise those country workers to the extent of some £65,000; and that from a Labour Government! I could stand here all night to talk about this question, raising my voice in protest and remonstrating with the Labour Government, at a time like the present, daring to impose such an unjust tax upon the people out-back. I could stand here, Mr. President, until you ordered me to sit down because it is my duty and that of other members to draw attention to this iniquitous business. That is what it is—iniquitous. Here we are doing our utmost to keep our country towns going and to provide work for those who are living away from the metropolitan area, and we find this form of unjust taxation being imposed! What sort of a democracy is it that we have? Our desire is to provide work for those of our people who are badly in need of it and yet we penalise them in every direction. I read in last week's "Hansard" a report of a speech made by a member of the Labour Party in another place deploring the increase in the number of unemployed. The Honorary Minister in this Chamber knows more about that subject than we do, but I was surprised that another member of his party should declare that there was an increase in unemployment.

The people of Geraldton enjoy the cheapest railway rates in the world, rates fixed by a very astute man. The rate is 50s. a ton and the increase that it is intended to impose will not affect the people of that town very much, but it will affect those living along the Wongan Line, and the Murchison goldfields line. I could not possibly support such an iniquitous by-law as that which Mr. Thomson is asking the House to disallow. While I do feel that it is an imposition, I know that even if I continued talking until to-morrow, I could not change the views of those members who have already made up their minds on this question. I have no wish to raise the cry of city versus country, or country versus

city, but I am on sound ground when I say that there are thousands of people living in this part of the State enjoying all the amenities of life, amenities that are denied to many people living away from the metropolitan area. It is on country people that the burden of a by-law such as that we are discussing will fall heavily. It is what I would regard as taking a mean advantage and heaping a burden on the load the man in the country is already carrying. I shall support the motion.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—TESTATOR'S FAMILY MAINTENANCE.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 101; Hours for closing of shops for the sale of motor spirit, oil, or accessories:

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 11 of paragraph (a) the word "one" be struck out and the word "two" inserted in lieu.

I move the amendment in the interests principally of people who are employed until 1 p.m. on Saturday. The time fixed by the paragraph does not afford such persons a reasonable opportunity to secure petrol supplies for the week-end. I was out of the Chamber when the clause was considered on Thursday. The amendment makes Saturday closing time 2 p.m. instead of 1 p.m.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I regret that Mr. Bolton's proposal was not discussed during the Committee stage. However, I raise no serious objection to his amendment if members feel that by it petrol service will be assured to the public.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The clause is for the benefit of employees.

Hon. W. J. MANN: This matter has been mentioned to me, especially in relation to Saturday afternoon. Many people who come into town from the suburbs have to remain in the business establishments until 1 p.m. on Saturday, and they complain that if on Saturday morning they should neglect to obtain petrol supplies sufficient for the afternoon, they have to remain at home on Saturday afternoon. I am not concerned about Sunday so much, but I do think the suggestion to close garages at 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon is much better than the suggested closing hour, namely 1 o'clock.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Bill will be ruined if the closing hour is altered from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. The object of the Bill is to improve the conditions of people employed in the industry.

Member: But without unduly inconveniencing the public.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If a man has to remain until 2 p.m. on Saturday, it means spoiling his whole Saturday afternoon. He should have time to go home and change his clothes, and then attend entertainments or sports like the pictures or football matches. The benefits proposed to be given by the Bill are gradually being whittled away. All sports and entertainments on Saturday afternoon start at 2 o'clock. This benefit should not be withdrawn from employees for the sake of motorists who are neglectful.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I took a good deal of convincing that the proposal in the Bill was desirable, and previously voted against it. However, inquiries I have made convince me that the clause as it stands is for the benefit of employees in the industry. Therefore I oppose the amendment.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I agree with Mr. Craig that the Bill will be practically lost if Mr. Bolton's amendment is adopted. The amendment will spoil the half-holiday not only of the employees but also of their families. If work ceases at 1 p.m., the employee can get back home and have lunch with his family and still take them out on the Saturday afternoon. Surely anyone who can afford to drive a motor car can buy sufficient petrol on Saturday morning, or else obtain the balance of his requirements on Sunday. Probably many motor cars are driven by people who should not have them. They go

to a garage and buy one gallon of petrol. These are the people Mr. Bolton desires to assist to get their petrol at 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, thus spoiling the half-holiday of a hard-working section of the community.

The CHAIRMAN: Is Mr. Bolton desirous of having his amendment apply to Saturday afternoon only, or of extending it to Sundays and holidays?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I prefer to have it refer to Saturday only.

The CHAIRMAN: In that case I suggest the hon. member move the insertion after the word "Saturday" of the words "between the hours of seven o'clock in the morning and two o'clock in the afternoon." That would leave the position as it stands in the clause with regard to Sundays and holidays.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Many people are unable during the week to fill their petrol tanks with 10 or 12 gallons. I wish to help the motorist who buys a couple of gallons on Saturday to see him over the week-end. I agree to your suggestion, Mr. Chairman, and ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Saturdays," in line 8 of paragraph (a), the words "between the hours of seven o'clock in the morning and two o'clock in the afternoon" be inserted.

Hon. G. FRASER: The amendment should be defeated. If it referred to Friday, there might be something in it; but on Friday evening garages remain open until 8 p.m. Very few employees are paid on Saturday; nearly all are paid on Friday.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I support Mr. Bolton's amendment because I consider that metropolitan motorists should be given ample time to obtain supplies of petrol on Saturday. Unfortunately I was not here when the clause was considered in Committee previously. My sympathy is with the motoring public, who are the means of supporting a large industry. Most garages are run by the proprietors with youth labour—and fairly young youths, too. People in the metropolitan area working from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. have not much chance to get petrol for Saturday afternoon or evening. The basic-wage earner can afford to buy only a couple of gallons at a time; and to force him to

purchase from four to six gallons at a time would cause him difficulty. My object is to grant metropolitan motorists a little latitude in obtaining petrol supplies on Saturday afternoon.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	16

Majority against .. 8

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. V. Hammersley

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. Hall
Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Bill again reported without further amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,200,000.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.36] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to authorise the granting of further supply for a period of two months pending the passing of the Estimates. Supply authorised under the No. 1 Supply Bill for the quarter ended the 30th September was apportioned as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,750,000
General Loan Fund ..	450,000
Treasurer's Advance ..	300,000
	<u>£2,500,000</u>

Under this measure supply of £1,200,000 is asked for from Consolidated Revenue. Expenditure for the first three months of the current financial year out of supply granted was as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,200,000
General Loan Fund ..	226,831

The balance on General Loan Fund under the No. 1 Supply Bill is expected to be sufficient to cover expenditure under that heading for the next two months. Expendi-

ture from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, including Special Acts for the first three months of the financial year, was as follows:—

	£
Special Acts	1,101,948
Governmental	786,637
Public Utilities	958,874
Total	<u>£2,847,459</u>

Compared with the first quarter of last year, total expenditure increased by £37,635, which amount is arrived at as follows:—

	£	£
Special Acts (Increase) ..	26,317	
Governmental „ ..	22,938	
		49,255
Public Utilities (Decrease) ..		11,620
		<u>£37,635</u>

The increase of £26,317 under Special Acts was due to heavier sinking fund and interest payments, which advanced £25,562. The main increase under Governmental was in respect of expenditure by the Unemployment and Labour Bureau. This item advanced by £5,188. Other increases under the same heading were of a minor character. Railway expenditure, which declined by £10,547, was responsible for most of the decrease of £11,620 under Public Utilities.

Revenue for the same period amounted to £2,480,940, made up as follows:—

	£	£
Taxation	631,335—Increase	17,204
Territorial	86,812—Decrease	14,317
Commonwealth Grants and Contributions	267,109—Increase	6,250
Public Utilities and State Trading Concerns	1,283,360—Decrease	2,244
Other	212,324—Increase	2,201
	<u>£2,480,940—Increase</u>	<u>£9,094</u>

Increased revenue from Income Tax and Financial Emergency Tax more than offset decreases in revenue from Stamp and Probate Duties and Goldmining Profits Tax. The decrease of £14,317 in Territorial was mainly attributable to the extension of pastoral rent remission. Revenue from Business Undertakings declined £2,244. Increases of £18,273 and £7,050 recorded by Railways and Electricity Supply respectively were offset by decreases in receipts from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, £12,550; State Trading Concerns, £10,664; and other headings. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.41]: It does savour of the futile or the impossible again to impress upon the Government the desirableness of doing something to increase the rate of progress of the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields. Year after year strenuous efforts have been made in this House to wake the Government up to the stern necessity for providing adequate housing accommodation on our goldfields. Each time the matter is brought up the Government shelters itself behind the Workers' Homes Board; but that board is the creation of Parliament, and in view of the agitation that has been proceeding for over three years on the goldfields for additional workers' homes, I very much regret that the goldfields electors endorsed the Government's decision to build only an infinitesimal number of workers' homes on the goldfields, because at the last election each goldfields electorate returned a supporter of the Government to the Legislative Assembly. In a sense, one would probably be justified in saying, "Well, let them stew in their own juice." It is no use our endeavouring to improve the lot or conditions of a section of electors who vote one way only, though the Heavens fall. However, I think it would be a charitable act to try to save them from themselves. For that reason I return to the charge, because of the urgent necessity for additional workers' homes on the goldfields.

The Chief Secretary: Do you know how many applications have been made?

HON. J. CORNELL: I do not know; but I do know that long ago many fine men on the goldfields discontinued making applications because, as they said, "What is the use of expending our energy on a futility?" The ukase has gone forth that the Workers' Homes Board intends to erect 16 homes a year on the goldfields—from Phillips River to Marble Bar. It is a sad commentary on the goldfields community to say that only 16 homes can be built, and I understand that number is being built in Kalgoorlie and Boulder only. Yet, if any town calls for housing accommodation, it is Norseman. In the debate on the Address-in-reply or on the Supply Bill (No. 1), Mr. Seddon told us that to the total export of wealth from this State, the gold mining industry contributes 48 per cent. I venture to say that if a proper estimate were made and if we included the amount taken from the industry by the

Federal Government, gold would be found to represent 55 per cent. of the exports of this State. Despite this fact, the workers who win the gold from the bowels of the earth are going to have 16 workers' homes built each year, and those workers are housed—in Norseman particularly—under conditions that would not be used for a goat in the metropolitan area. If there is justification for building 16 homes a year on the goldfields, there is justification for building more. When I look around the metropolitan area and see the workers' homes that have been built in the last three or four years, some of them costing £700 or £800, and when I consider that many of the people who get workers' homes run motor cars, I conclude that the Workers' Homes Act as applied in the metropolitan area, has lost its original significance. Evidently what the board considers is not the question, "Should this man have a worker's home?" but, "Can this man finance the building of and maintain the payments for a worker's home?"

Hon. G. Fraser: That has been altered quite recently.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In the district where I live homes have been erected far in excess of the value allowed by the Act, the tenants having provided the additional money. If a man is in the position to finance the purchase of a motor car, he can finance the purchase of a home.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are a lot of the £550 homes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of Western Australia's exports, gold represents about 55 per cent., and I think that percentage will increase considerably as the war continues, but the Government which draws its main and everlasting support from the goldfields—

Hon. G. W. Miles: And from the West Province.

Hon. J. CORNELL: —says that it cannot do better than erect 16 workers' homes a year. Better would it be if none at all were provided. Sixteen homes mean nothing, and the Government's action in providing so limited a number is tantalising to the men who want a home and cannot get it. I know of instances on the goldfields of single persons having been granted workers' homes, and rightly so, but men less fortunately situated have been unable to get homes. This is due to the limited number of homes provided on the goldfields.

We have been told that the Workers' Homes Board is not responsible. I have yet to learn that any board created by Parliament is not responsible to the Legislature. Steps should be taken to ensure that this board is made amenable to the Legislature. I make this appeal because of the urgent need for housing accommodation on the goldfields. Notwithstanding the millions of outside capital introduced into the goldfields during the last five years, all that the Government thinks of the goldfields is that they are worth 16 homes a year.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.52]: I cannot be accused of having filled many pages of "Hansard" this session. I was away in the early part and ill-health prevented me from returning in time to speak on the Address-in-reply. There are several matters touching finance that I wish to stress. I did not enter into the discussion on Mr. Thomson's motion this afternoon, but I was struck with the fact that while railway traffic has been reduced, the report of the Commissioner of Railways shows that 631 more men were employed by the department last year than in the previous year. When we analyse the finances of the State, we cannot help wondering where we are heading and where it will all end.

I have taken the figures for the five years' period commencing in July, 1935, and ending in June, 1939, and I find that during that period the public debt has increased by £7,000,000, namely from £88,000,000 to £95,000,000. If we go back to the year 1930 we find that the public debt was £70,000,000, so that the increase since that year has been £25,000,000. The per capita indebtedness increased during the 1935-39 period from £179 10s. to £204 10s., an increase of £7 per head. If we allow £70 per head for Commonwealth indebtedness, the figures work out on an interest basis at approximately 3s. 6d. per week for each individual on State indebtedness and 1s. 6d. a week to cover Federal indebtedness, which means that each individual in the State is carrying an interest burden of 5s. per week. We talk of increasing the population of the State and we urge larger families, but when Governments demand, as now, an interest charge of 5s. per week for every child born in the State, we cannot wonder that people hesitate about having large families.

As I said, the per capita indebtedness is £204 10s. State and £70 Federal, making a total of £274 10s. So far as I can judge from the writings of financial experts—I mean world experts, not St. George's-terrace experts—the people of a country, to live in comparative comfort, should not be required to carry an indebtedness of more than £100 per head. The State's per capita expenditure for the year ended the 30th June, 1935, was £21 9s., and for the year ended the 30th June, 1939, £24 3s., an increase during that period of £2 14s. Strange to say, during 1930-39, the population increased at the rate of only 3,000 a year, equal to 30,000 for 10 years. In the same period we have increased the public debt by £25,000,000, and apparently, on those figures, it has cost the State £800 for every additional person provided for in this State. But still we continue to borrow and spend.

Hon. A. Thomson: Trying to borrow our way into prosperity.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We borrow and we spend, and we need more money to pay our interest bill. We set up a vicious circle—increased taxation, increased cost of production followed by an increase in the basic wage. This is followed by a further increase in the cost of production, another increase in the cost of living and another increase in the basic wage. Up go the railway freights and again there is an increase in the cost of living, to be followed by another increase in the basic wage. To my mind the time has arrived when we should review the financial position because, if we have wandered along like this in times of peace, where are we likely to end in war time? Now and again members in this House have faced the problem and have said in effect, "While things are going fairly well, we should put our finances in order." Had we done it, we could have faced the war period more easily than seems likely to be our experience.

Apart from the figures I have quoted, I do not think the Government, since the Financial Agreement was passed in 1927, has been honest. Under that Agreement an undertaking was given to pay a 4 per cent. sinking fund on all money borrowed for deficit purposes. The reason for that provision was that against such money there was no asset. It was, therefore, agreed that money borrowed for deficit purposes should carry a sinking fund of 4 per cent. per annum. So far as I can learn,

no such sinking fund has been established. We have dodged our responsibilities. Whilst we have borrowed millions of money since that period commenced, and have an aggregate deficit of £6,000,000, we have not fulfilled our obligations by paying 4 per cent. out of revenue into a sinking fund. That this has not been done amounts to a quibble on the part of the State Governments. They have said that the money was not borrowed for deficit purposes, but for railway and other public works, and consequently they have been able to evade the Agreement although they used the money to finance the deficit. I have worked out what would have been paid since 1927 had we abided by the Financial Agreement, and have ascertained that the amount in question would have been anything between one and a-half and one and three-quarter millions. That amount of revenue should have gone into the sinking fund, but it was never paid to such fund. The world is fighting for the fulfilment of contracts and obligations. If the Government is going to dodge its responsibilities in this matter, someone ought to call a halt. Had that money been paid into the sinking fund, instead of the deficit amounting to £6,000,000, it would have amounted to £7,750,000, but we would have shown the world the exact position of affairs, and it is with that object in view I am raising these points.

These are not times when one wishes to use unkind words, but I could say a great deal about those things the Government could have done but failed to do. Much has been said about profiteering. From travelling around the country I have come to the conclusion that the starting-price bookmaker is the greatest of all profiteers. He lives in affluence at the expense of the country, but the Government does not appear to have enough courage to tackle him. I have seen enough in my travels to know that starting-price bookmakers constitute a menace to the community. I have journeyed with them by rail, by steam and by air. They always travel first-class; they toil not neither do they spin.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I am afraid that will be the end of you.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This type of betting has grown to such an extent that it becomes the duty of any Government to stamp it out. So far as I can judge

nothing has been done except to arrest a few of these people, and occasionally fine them. I understand there is a bookmakers' association, that its members contribute to a fund, and that the fines are paid from the moneys so raised. The business continues. It is idle to say that these people cannot be detected. I wonder that this evil is allowed to go on. The dogs in the street are barking about it. I visited a country town not 200 miles from Perth, and was sitting in a hotel when a tall, handsome, well-dressed young man entered. I thought he was a bank inspector, or someone who intended to buy up half the town. I asked who the young man was, and was informed that he was a starting-price bookmaker operating from the barber's shop in the main street. I walked down the street and saw the barber's pole outside the shop. I could not ascertain that the shop was ever open except at race times, and was surprised to see that three telephone numbers were posted up on the window. Imagine a barber's shop in a country town being linked up with three telephones! This was nothing but a starting-price betting shop, though evidently the police could not see it. I travelled by steamer to Port Hedland, about a week before the Port Hedland races. Two well-dressed respectable looking men were on board. We arrived at Port Hedland on a Wednesday morning. They told me they had learned, much to their disgust, that they could not proceed to Marble Bar at once, because there would be no train for two days. I went further north myself, and returned to Port Hedland ten days later. The two men were still at Port Hedland, and so far as I could discover had never intended to go to Marble Bar. They were there for the races, and in my opinion they fleeced the people who attended the meeting. When I was flying from Broome to Port Hedland I noticed a man who had travelled from Hall's Creek to attend the Port Hedland races. He joined the other bookmakers, and told me that when he had finished at Port Hedland he intended to fly to Wyndham—some hundreds of miles—to attend the race meeting at that port. We can see this sort of thing going on everywhere. It is a menace to the community, but the Government seems unable to tackle it. If the police in the towns cannot see what is going

on, it is the duty of the Government to engage an oculist to test their eyesight. Any man, blind in one eye but with an independent mind, could see what was going on. People are asking what Parliament is doing in the matter. I have told several persons that Parliament has already passed the hottest anti-betting legislation known in the Commonwealth. Parliament has said it is illegal for people to bet either on or off the racecourse, but we cannot induce the Administration to act accordingly. Parliament is at a dead-end. I can hardly imagine a greater evil, from the point of view of the community, than is this particular one.

Hon. G. Fraser: Parliament gave two different decisions on betting last year.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Is that so? I do not think this House was able to influence the Government in any way, but this House has never repealed any of the anti-betting legislation, which makes it an offence for people to bet either on or off a racecourse.

I now wish to deal with hotels. In connection with these establishments abuses are allowed to go on that should not be tolerated. Some licensees may do as they like, and others may not look sideways. Parliament has passed the best licensing Act that is in force anywhere in the British Empire. We have given the Licensing Court more power than is given to the Lord Chief Justice of England. According to British justice, a man must be considered innocent before he is proved guilty. Under our liquor laws we reverse that principle, for if a person is found on licensed premises after closing hours or before opening hours, the police have not to prove that he is there to obtain liquor, but the individual has to prove that he is there for some other purpose. We have not to go far from the city to find hotels that are allowed to trade at all hours while, in the case of others, if the front door is open outside the regulation hours policemen are ready to hop in. We find the same thing in the country. I was waiting for a train one night, and was resting on a couch in the local hotel. Everything was quiet, but a policeman drew my attention to the fact that I was in a room upon the window of which was printed the words "saloon bar". I was ordered out of the place, and had to walk about the streets until the train arrived. On a subsequent occasion I was in another hotel not 50 miles away. I could not sleep

for the racket, the noise, and the concertina playing that was going on all round me, although it was a Sunday night, but no one took any notice or cared what took place. I cannot arrive at any conclusion on this matter. All kinds of rumours have come to me, but I have too much respect for some of my friends of the Labour Party to think that they would consent to this sort of thing being permitted to continue.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Before the tea suspension I was dealing with one section of the Licensing Act. If there is any portion of the legislation that Parliament should be proud of it is the two Acts to which I have made reference. The trouble is that we cannot secure the administration of those Acts, and what is more serious is that the public wants to know what Parliament is doing in regard to such matters. In those two particular instances Parliament did its job, and all I ask is that the Government shall live up to what is expected of it and enforce the Acts that Parliament has sanctioned.

Reverting to the question of finance, if the present system is to continue, very soon practically everything will be nationalised. Every imposition by the Government takes money from private enterprise and adds it to Government enterprise. If I read the position correctly, private enterprise will ultimately have so little and the Crown will have so much that every activity will be more or less nationalised. I wish to quote one paragraph of the Financial Agreement to prove that I was right when I said that a sinking fund levy of 4 per cent should have been charged against revenue and has not been so charged. The paragraph from the Agreement reads—

In respect of any loan raised after the 30th June, 1927, by a State or by the Commonwealth for and on behalf of a State to meet a revenue deficit accruing after that date, no sinking fund shall be payable by the Commonwealth, but that State shall pay from revenue a sinking fund contribution at a rate not less than 4 per cent. per annum. . . .

I claim that £1,750,000 should be added to the deficit because that amount is due from revenue to the sinking fund.

Every imposition, tax or other condition imposed upon private enterprise helps in turn to cripple industry. Some Ministers

are not satisfied with crippling secondary industries but do their part in dealing with primary industries as well. We can appreciate the efforts of the Minister for Industrial Development (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) to encourage the establishment of secondary industries in Western Australia, but he is hampered at every turn. Sometime ago he published columns in the newspaper in support of his attempt to induce people in the Eastern States to turn their attention to Western Australia and establish secondary industries here. In one issue, concurrently with the Minister's contribution, appeared a statement by Mr. Trainer, the General Secretary of the Australian Labour Federation here, in which he told the people in answer to his colleague the Minister for Industrial Development—Mr. Trainer's statement was not really in answer to the Minister but he gave out the information to the public, including the people the Minister was trying to induce to visit this State to open up factories—that the workers in Western Australia enjoyed the highest wages, the best working conditions, the best Industrial Arbitration Act and the best Workers' Compensation Act. That was interesting information for the people we were endeavouring to induce to commence operations in this State. If ever a Government did not let its left hand know what its right hand was doing, it is the Government of Western Australia. As with all other ventures, the Government started at the wrong end. If the Minister for Industrial Development expects to secure results regarding the establishment of secondary industries, he must display a bold front and act accordingly. He must tell the people in the Eastern States that if they come here to establish secondary industries they will enjoy conditions, rates of wages, working hours and industrial legislation, similar to those applying in the East. Furthermore, he must give an undertaking that no departure will be made from that arrangement. On the other hand, we have too many laws that are at variance with those in operation elsewhere in Australia, and particularly does that apply to the Industrial Arbitration Act. Here in at least one big strike the Government participated on the side of the strikers.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Government did that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes. People must be satisfied there will be no recurrence of

that attitude on the part of the Government before they will invest capital in Western Australia. Some years ago H. V. McKay was about to embark upon the manufacture of agricultural machinery in Western Australia. That would have been a wonderful development for us. He had an option over 10 acres of land between Perth and Guildford. Before starting operations, however, he wanted to be satisfied that in Western Australia he would be allowed to operate under piece work conditions similar to those to which he had been accustomed in the Eastern States. The unions replied, "No; no piece work for us in the manufacture of agricultural machinery or of anything else, if we can avoid it." H. V. McKay did not go on with his proposal. In Western Australia we established the State Implement Works. I have the figures for 1938 and according to the Auditor General the works showed a loss to that date of £309,000. It would have been much better had McKay been allowed to start the manufacture of agricultural implements.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A lot of the State Implement Works capital was written off.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have quoted the Auditor General's figures; the hon. member can add to them if he likes. Had McKay been allowed to establish a factory here and work under conditions similar to those operating in the Eastern States, that loss of £309,000 would have been avoided, and all the agricultural machinery required would have been manufactured within the State.

There is another point I wish to make before concluding my remarks. Our revenue for the year ended the 30th June, 1935, amounted to £9,450,000. For the financial year ended the 30th June, 1939, the revenue was £11,850,000, showing an increase of £1,850,000. In the former financial year the interest and sinking fund contributions totalled £3,550,000 and in the latter financial year, £4,000,000. That indicates an increase of only £450,000 in the provision of interest and sinking fund payments for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1939, and that was largely due to a reduction in interest rates. Taking into consideration the increased revenue as between 1935 and 1939, amounting to £1,850,000, and deducting the increased interest and sinking fund contributions of £450,000, a surplus was disclosed

of £1,400,000 for 1939 as against 1938. One is inclined to ask: What has become of all that revenue? During the period of 10 years covered by those figures our population increased by 30,000. Of that total, 22,000 represented the excess of births over deaths and the remaining 8,000 comprised people from overseas. In the same period we increased our national indebtedness by £24,000,000. As I pointed out previously, each of those babies and persons from overseas cost £800 to establish. All this has occurred in times of peace. I am more or less alarmed as to what is ahead of us. In order further to clarify the position, I would point out that the State per capita indebtedness is £204 10s., while the corresponding Federal indebtedness is £70, making a total of £274 10s. Financial experts say that an indebtedness of £100 per capita is the maximum any community can carry, and at the same time live under reasonable conditions. Notwithstanding all this, we go on with reckless expenditure. We borrow and spend. We tax to make ends meet, and we do not make them meet. We dodge our responsibilities under the Financial Agreement and in other respects. Sooner or later there must be a day of reckoning. I do hope the Government will take note of the figures I have presented to the House. I regard them as authentic. I trust that the laws of the State will be enforced, that economies of every description and in every direction will be effected, and that we shall do everything to decrease overhead charges. Increased production is the only means by which we can emerge from the difficulties that are ahead of us. I am bound to vote for the second reading of the Bill, which is for revenue purposes. I assume that the money is available. I hope members will look carefully into the matter, and that when the Loan Bill is before them, they will have something to say on the subject.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.45] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to continue

the operations of the Lotteries (Control) Act until the 31st December, 1942. On this occasion it is sought to extend the term of the Act for a period of three years instead of one year as formerly. The total amount subscribed this year to the six consultations finalised up to the end of Consultation No. 80 was £141,596 10s. Consultation No. 75 was the last of the lotteries conducted under the old system. Subsequent consultations have been conducted on a larger scale, and involved the purchase of a new barrel and marbles at a cost of £1,019 11s. 3d. Prize money was allocated amounting to £71,940 2s. 6d. (50.8 per cent. of the amount subscribed) and expenses totalled £21,514 9s. 3d. or 15.2 per cent of total subscriptions. The latter amount includes the ten per cent. commission paid to agents. There was thus left for distribution a sum of £48,141 18s. 3d. (34 per cent.). This amount, together with a balance of £57,618 10s. 11d. carried forward from the previous year, (bank interest amounting to £996 13s. 5d., and unclaimed prize money and unexpended grants totalling £409 16s. 2d.) brought the total available for distribution to £107,166 18s. 9d. Of this sum £63,200 1s. was paid out in donations this year, while the commitments amounted to £31,946 14s. 5d. This leaves a balance for further distribution of £12,020 3s. 4d.

Financial assistance to the extent of £36,451 8s. 7d. has been given to hospitals from the 1st January to the 7th September. The principal beneficiaries were as follows:

Hospital.	Amount.
	£ s. d.
Busselton	1,407 15 0
Children's	6,305 0 0
King Edward Memorial ..	13,500 0 0
Kellerberrin	1,150 0 0
Kalgoorlie	8,032 13 4
Perth	2,492 7 0

Other hospitals throughout the State enjoyed the balance of the distribution. Through the different committees for the relief of the indigent and needy, the Commission has distributed 1,250 pairs of blankets and 775 pairs of sheets, and the sum of £2,636 18s. 6d. has been spent for the relief of distress. Donations granted to

orphanages totalled £9,594 5s., and were as follows:—

Orphanage.	Amount.
	£ s. d.
Anglican—Swan Boys'	1,687 14 0
" Perth Girls'	623 1 0
Castledare	1,006 4 0
Clontarf	3,984 2 0
Parkerville	804 1 0
St. Joseph's	789 2 0
St. Vincent's Foundling Home	700 1 0
Total	£9,594 5 0

Amongst other institutions and organisations that have benefited from the Commission's activities, have been the following:—

	£ s. d.
Australian Aerial Medical Services	1,000 0 0
Braille Society	966 0 0
Hospital Social Service	1,687 10 0
Infant Health Association	1,506 0 0
Metropolitan Council of Unemployment Relief Committee ..	1,050 0 0
North-Eastern Wheatbelt Relief Committee	750 0 0
Silver Chain Nursing Association	750 0 0
School for the Blind	2,250 0 0
St. John Ambulance Association	2,399 15 0

The contributions enumerated represent a wide and extensive list, and there can be no doubt that, as a result of the activities of the Commission, the various charitable organisations have been able to carry out their good work on a much more liberal scale than would otherwise have been possible. The Commission has now been operating for seven years, and can be claimed to have given general satisfaction throughout that period. Undoubtedly the enactment of last year's amending legislation has proved of material assistance to the Commission. I think the statement I made originally that there would be a larger amount of money available for charitable purposes if this legislation were enacted has been justified. It is still felt, however, that better results could be achieved by placing the Act on a more permanent basis, and thereby enabling the Commission to frame a longer range policy than has been possible under the annual continuance legislation. That has been advocated by the Commission for some years past, but the attitude adopted by this Chamber each year has prevented its being given a longer tenure than one year, and that has militated against the Commission doing some of the things it would very much like to do. The Commission has justified itself in every possible way. There is not one district in Western Australia that has not reaped great benefit from its activities. With

every truth the statement can be made that but for the operations of the Commission, the country hospitals would not have been equipped in anything like the up-to-date manner in which they are equipped to-day.

Hon. L. Craig: There is no doubt about that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Commission has been of benefit to the community in other directions. I have supplied a list of donations made to various orphanages throughout the State. I venture to assert that but for the operations of the Lotteries Commission those organisations could not have done as much as they have done in recent years. The conditions under which the orphans in their care have lived would not have been possible without the help afforded by the Commission. The amount of money distributed each year has made it easier for those charitable organisations to continue their good work. If the Commission can be given a longer tenure of office, it will be able to do even more satisfactory work. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [7.56] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to provide for compulsory insurance against third-party risks arising out of the use of motor vehicles. Briefly, the Bill provides that no license shall be issued for a motor vehicle unless the applicant has taken out a policy of insurance covering the legal liability of any person driving the vehicle—with or without the consent of the owner—in respect to the death of or bodily injury to a third person. It is not proposed to cover damage to property, and a policy of insurance shall be deemed to comply with the Act notwithstanding that it does not cover the spouse of the insured person, or other relatives not more remote than the fourth degree, or his servants, and (in the case of non-passenger vehicles) persons travelling in the vehicle of the insured. Similar provisions were embodied in a measure that was introduced towards the close of last session.

For some years past, members of this Chamber and another place, as well as such organisations as the Royal Automobile Club, the various hospital authorities, the Local Government Association and the Commissioner of Police, have urged that the liability for third-party risks should be borne compulsorily by the owners of motor vehicles. It has been pointed out that there are far too many instances in which persons injured by the negligence of drivers have not recovered a penny of the amount to which they were entitled as compensation for permanent injury, or for hospital or medical expenses simply because the owner of the vehicle at fault was not insured, and was unable to pay. While various Governments have fully realised the desirability of legislation of this character, they have deemed it advisable, in view of the importance of the issues involved, to await the results of similar laws in force in the more populous States, before proceeding with the introduction of legislation here. Queensland and Tasmania have had this type of legislation on the statute book for some years past, and similar enactments are to be found on the English and New Zealand statute books.

In South Australia, a Bill providing for compulsory third-party insurance was enacted in 1936 following lengthy research by a special committee on road transport. That legislation was proclaimed as from April 1st, 1937.

A Bill "To require the owners of motor cars to insure against liability in respect of death or bodily injuries caused by the use of such motor cars, to enable insurance in relation to motor cars to be undertaken by the State, and for other purposes," was introduced into the Victorian Legislative Assembly in July of this year. I understand also that the Transport Department of New South Wales has a similar Bill in process of preparation. The Bill now before the House is based on the provisions of the South Australian Act of 1936, as amended in 1938. In a measure such as this the question of premiums is naturally a matter of first class importance to motorists. The South Australian Act provides for the appointment of a committee of six comprising a judge of the Supreme Court, or a special magistrate, or a legal practitioner as chairman, the Government Actuary, two representatives of motor vehicle owners; and two representatives of the approved insurers, for the pur-

pose of inquiring into premiums charged under that legislation. This premiums committee has all the powers of a Royal Commission, and periodically it reviews rates and reports as to whether premiums are fair and reasonable. The current South Australian premiums were adopted upon the recommendation of this Committee.

The rates are as follows—

Class of Vehicle.	District A (within 20 miles of G.P.O., Adelaide).	District B (elsewhere).
Private car	£ s. d. 1 7 6	£ s. d. 0 17 6
Class "A"—Business car (private type vehicle)	3 10 0	1 0 0
Class "B"—Goods-carrying vehi- cles (trucks, vans, etc.)	2 5 0	2 0 0
Primary producers farmers' vehicles	2 5 0	1 0 0
Class "C"—Hire vehicles—private hire cars and other hire vehicles (including undertakers' vehicles) carrying passengers—up to 7 passengers	5 0 0	5 0 0
Service cars and Buses— Up to 7 passengers	6 0 0	6 0 0
Plus per seat in excess of 7	0 10 0	0 10 0
<i>Note.</i> —Cars carrying mail and passengers to be classified as service cars.		
Taxi meter cars	10 0 0	10 0 0
Private motor cycles	1 5 0	1 0 0
Business motor cycles	2 5 0	1 5 0
VISITING VEHICLES.		
Private motor cars and cycles	2/6 plus 1/- per week after first week.	
Business motor cars and cycles	5/- plus 2/6 per week after first week.	
Trucks	5/- plus 2/6 per week after first week.	
All other vehicles (except hire vehicles)	2/6 plus 1/- per week after first week (with a maximum premium as per class).	

Members will have noted that premiums charged in respect of private cars are 27s. 6d. if the district of registration is within 20 miles of the General Post Office and 17s. 6d. elsewhere in the State. In Queensland the premium is 30s., and in Tasmania 25s. The premium in New Zealand was recently increased from 20s. to 26s. These variations are at least partly explained by differences in the extent of the cover required under the several statutes.

The measure now before the House provides for the appointment of a premiums committee similar to the body constituted under the South Australian Act. If Parliament approves of the measure, the proclamation of the Act will probably be deferred until such time as the committee has investigated and determined what will be a fair and reasonable schedule of premium rates for this State. From preliminary

inquiries already made by the Government Actuary and the Under Secretary for Works, it would appear that rates somewhat in excess of those operating in South Australia would be justified in this State. In this connection I am advised that the average amount per claim settled under "comprehensive policies" in Western Australia is in excess of the corresponding figure for South Australia. The conclusion reached by the officers who conducted the preliminary investigation was, however, purely tentative, and they admit that it was possible to secure conclusive data.

Prior to the introduction of last year's measure, the Underwriters' Association informed the Minister that it would accept the risks under an Act similar to that operating in South Australia at the rates of premium charged in that State, plus 20 per cent., provided the schedule was reviewed by a premiums committee at the end of the first year's operations, when a further adjustment might be necessary. On the basis suggested by the Underwriters' Association, the premium for the metropolitan area would be 33s.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Would that be 33s. per cent.?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, for the third party risk.

Hon. A. Thomson: Accident risk.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. The Association however, would prefer an investigation into rates, by the proposed statutory committee, before the proclamation of the Act. Under the standard third-party cover at present operating in this State, the rates are as follows:—

		£	s.	d.
Metropolitan area	..	..	3	10 0
Goldfields area	..	..	3	15 0
Elsewhere	..	..	3	0 0

The scope of the standard policy extends to damage to property as well as persons.

Turning now to the provisions of the Bill, I would emphasise that the insurance will "follow the car" whether the vehicle is driven by the owner or by an authorised or unauthorised person. Cover will extend to all liability for negligence which may be incurred in respect of the death of, or bodily injury to any person, caused by, or arising out of the use of the vehicle. As to passenger vehicles, the limit of compulsory cover for fare-paying passenger risks only, is £2,000 for any one person, and £20,000 for any one accident.

Except in the case of passenger vehicles, it will not be necessary for an owner to insure against any liability incurred in respect of a person conveyed in his motor car. No limit is stipulated in regard to other risks.

The Bill contains special provisions, adopted from the South Australian Act, in relation to "hit and run" motor vehicles. Where the identity of a car involved in a "hit and run" accident cannot be ascertained, any person who could have obtained a judgment against the unidentified driver, will be competent to sue a nominal defendant to be named by the Minister on the advice of the premiums committee. Any damages thus awarded will be borne by all approved insurers. A similar provision will apply in the case of uninsured vehicles. This proposal has been copied from the Victorian Bill.

We are also providing for the amendment of Section 9 of the principal Act which deals with application for licenses. The effect of the proposed amendment will be to discontinue the standard licensing period from the 1st July to the 30th June and enable owners of vehicles to license for six or twelve months at their option. The licensing period will operate from the date when the application for the license is made.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: At any time during the year?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. This will be of great advantage. This change is necessary to enable the compulsory insurance required to be co-ordinated with the period for which the vehicle is licensed. The period covered by the license and the policy will be identical. A special provision, taken from the Victorian Bill, has been included in regard to vehicles held for sale by dealers. No licenses are issued in connection with those vehicles, and we are therefore providing that a separate policy will have to be taken out with each set of identification tablets issued to such dealers. The Bill also provides that policies, to be valid, shall be taken out with an insurer approved by the Minister, and in this connection, provision is made for approval to be granted to the State Insurance Office for the purposes of the proposed legislation.

The principle of compulsory third-party insurance is dictated by considerations of public interest, and it is therefore essential that service be rendered to the com-

munity on the cheapest and most efficient basis possible. Other provisions in the Bill are mainly of a machinery character, and deal with such matters as—

1. Duties of the owner or insurer upon the happening of any accident.
2. Powers of insurers to deal with claims against insured persons.
3. Payments by insurers for emergency and hospital treatment.
4. The payment of hospital expenses in the case of injuries caused by un-insured vehicles.
5. Rights of approved insurers against un-authorised drivers.
6. Trial of actions (without juries).
7. Insurance by visiting motorists.
8. Power to suspend, or cancel licenses on the application of an approved insurer.
9. Information to be furnished by insurers.
10. Soliciting instructions for gain from persons claiming (ambulance chasing).
11. Notice of claims for damages.
12. Medical examination of injured persons.
13. Regulations.

No information is available to indicate the number of vehicles actually covered for third-party risks at the present time. One leading insurance authority has stated that probably only about 50 per cent. of the motor vehicles on the roads are so covered. This statement would imply that there are about 35,000 owners in this State who have failed to take out third-party cover.

Having regard to the number and incidence of motor accidents in this State, members will realise that this is an alarming position indeed. When the South Australian Bill was introduced into Parliament in 1936, the Minister in charge stated that a special committee appointed to investigate road traffic problems in that State had reported that damages to the extent of £29,000 awarded to persons injured in road accidents had never been paid because defendants had no money and were not insured. It is probable that an inquiry in this State would reveal similar conditions. The advisableness of introducing this legislation has been considered for a long while. It is time that Western Australia came into line with the other States in this respect and in this way greatly benefit the dependents of those killed or those who may be injured as a result of motor

accidents. I commend the measure to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson debate adjourned.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [8.16]: I listened to the debate on the Bill last week with much interest and also with considerable surprise. My surprise was occasioned by the direct conflict of opinions between two hon. members who sit close together—though there is nothing in that—and who are somewhat of the same political complexion. Moreover, they represent people engaged in similar industries. The opinions of those two members were in direct opposition. The two hon. gentlemen are most deservedly held in the highest esteem here, and are usually listened to with great respect. Now, what is the position of a layman when experts are thus divided? Mr. Cornell led off by telling us that we had listened to the interlocking engineer and that now we were to listen to the engineer-labourer. I believe I am correct in stating what Mr. Cornell said.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has been reading "Hansard."

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In the application of his remark, Mr. Cornell is entirely wrong. I have been reading "Hansard," but I have not read the speeches to which I now refer. Those utterances produced a strong effect on my mind, and left me where I seldom find myself. I shall now proceed to indicate where I stand relatively to this important measure.

I obtained the adjournment of the debate in order to enable me to secure further particulars. I am a representative of the Central Province, which includes the Murchison Goldfields. I meant to secure the opinions of people connected with mining in that distant portion of the State. The measure also has a close application to machinery scattered through other portions of the Province, including the important town of Geraldton and agricultural areas. I now wish to sound a note which has been heard here

previously. Mr. Thomson said he, as a layman, found considerable difficulty in giving this highly technical measure the consideration it deserves. I do not know whether I am right, but I understand that at least Mr. Thomson is now a tradesman, though perhaps not an engineer. In my opinion a tradesman has a much better opportunity to judge a Bill of this nature than one who, unfortunately, is not a tradesman—I refer to myself. Mr. Thomson said he had experienced much difficulty in giving to the many technical clauses of the Bill that amount of consideration which he thought they should receive. Then we have Mr. Seddon and Mr. Cornell, who, I take it, have a fairly close knowledge of the mining industry, which, as we all know, is largely concerned with machinery. We find those two hon. members directly opposed to each other as regards the need for the Bill. If anything of a serious nature is agitating the public mind, members of Parliament are not so far removed from the people as to remain in doubt on the subject. I have adopted a similar attitude here previously, and when I find myself in a condition of doubt, as on this occasion, I fall back on past experience. The Bill has been before Parliament for well over a month, and during that period I have not been approached with regard to it either verbally or by letter. The town of Geraldton alone has two ice works. The management of neither has approached me on the matter. The managers may not have read the brief reports accorded to the debate on the Bill by our one morning paper. I refer to the debate in this Chamber; I cannot speak as to the space allotted to speeches elsewhere. However, the fact remains that I have neither heard nor read of any considerable agitation either by those directly connected with machinery of any kind, or by public bodies, or by the general public. I have not been apprised, or made aware, that there is any general demand for legislation of this type. I do not dispute that accidents have occurred. Unfortunately, accidents are bound to happen. It is Parliament's duty, I admit, to endeavour as far as humanly possible to prevent accidents from happening; but, as has been pointed out in the course of the debate, the parent Act has been on the statute-book for many years. This Act, which we are now asked to amend, has been in force, I repeat, for many years; and I agree with those hon.

members who say that the present time is somewhat inopportune for making such changes as the Bill outlines.

Now I shall refer to something that I do not like referring to; but we are not here to say merely those things that we like saying; I assume that we are here to say things we conceive it to be our duty to say. That note has been sounded here before; and I dislike referring to certain aspects, but it is my duty to do so. I did read in "Hansard" that one hon. member mentioned the filling of vacancies on boards such as the one which the Bill proposes to enlarge, with friends of the Government. The board under the Act is to be enlarged from three members to five. That is something which has been protested against in this Chamber frequently. Yet it still continues. The present Government is especially to blame on that score, simply because, I suppose, it has been in power for many successive years. There was a National-Country Party regime for three brief years many years ago, in the dim and distant past. No doubt that Government also was guilty of some similarly regrettable appointments. I care not what party may be in power: I have always protested against appointments of that nature, and I hope I shall continue to do so. The Bill, as I have said, provides for the enlargement of the board from three members to five; and it has been suggested that the bad practice of the past might be continued, and that the Government might foolishly appoint two of its particular friends to the vacancies which the Bill proposes to create. If you will allow me, Mr. President, I will mention that my justification for making that statement was briefly exemplified when a clerk of works was sent to Geraldton to supervise the erection of the Geraldton High School. The gentleman in question was a defeated Labour member for a metropolitan constituency. I understand he is a very good bricklayer, but I am informed that his qualifications to act as clerk of works for a large building such as I have mentioned are certainly not of the highest. We have in Geraldton a district architect; and, speaking as a layman and from what I have heard, I consider it would have been infinitely better to retain that professional gentleman in Geraldton to supervise the building operations than to send an ex-Labour member of Parliament to do a job

for which I and many others do not regard him as fully qualified. Why are these things done? They tend to shake public confidence. Such appointments are made by whom? And how? I am not prepared, if I can prevent it, to allow this Government to repeat that kind of thing. For that reason, and because I have not received advice or information from any of my constituents, I shall not vote against the second reading of the Bill. According to Mr. Seddon, there may be some virtue in the measure which can be retained in Committee. Moreover, I dislike voting against a Bill on second reading. However, I reserve my right to vote in Committee against those clauses to which I am opposed. With these reservations, I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [8.28]: I had intended to introduce my remarks on the Bill with words such as Mr. E. H. Hall has uttered. My wish was to express surprise at the conflict of opinion between Mr. Seddon and Mr. Cornell. However, I may add that many people with whom I have spoken about the Bill and who are associated with engineering—whether their qualifications are high or are low—seem to hold varying opinions on the measure. Indeed, I have not met with two opinions which were the same. Anyhow, I shall support the second reading. Having gone through the measure I do not see much wrong with it. When it has passed through Committee, it should be unobjectionable. The parent Act has existed for something like 18 years without amendment. During that time much alteration has occurred in many kinds of machinery, particularly refrigerating plants. Unfortunately, there have been fatal accidents connected with those plants, chiefly in the big installations. Numerous accidents have also occurred in smaller plants; luckily free from mortality, but they have occurred.

A feature of the Bill is the increase of the number of members of the board from three to five. Again, I cannot see much wrong with the constitution of the proposed board. Mr. E. H. Hall criticised it very strongly; but I think members who have read the Bill will find that the duties and the qualifications of each member of the board are definitely specified. Of the first three, one is to be the Chief Inspector of Machinery, the

second a person holding a first-class engineer's certificate, and the third a person holding a winding engine-driver's certificate. The qualifications of the other two members are specified, but apparently they will act as deputies in the absence of any of the three whom I have just mentioned. It has been said that boards are very costly, but I do not think this board will prove to be so. Of course, expense will have to be incurred to meet salaries, but it will not stop at that. The members of the board will be called upon to perform important duties. Among such duties is the granting of two certificates that have not hitherto been issued, the first-class engineer's certificate and the second-class engineer's certificate. When one notes the duties of a first-class engineer, one is led to the conclusion that he must be a highly qualified man. The holder of such a certificate is entitled to take charge of the erection, repair or maintenance of any boilers or machinery to which the Act applies, and to drive and have charge of any refrigerating machinery, any air compressor, any internal combustion engine, any steam engine, including steam turbines or any boiler, with the exception of a locomotive running on lines of 3ft. 6in. gauge or over, and of a winding engine by which men are being raised or lowered.

Hon. J. Cornell: He will be able to drive a locomotive on a mine.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes, because the gauges on mining properties are less than 3ft. 6in. He cannot, however, drive a locomotive on a line of 3ft. 6in. gauge or over. Provision is also made for a second-class engineer's certificate. Both these certificates are higher than those now held by a first-class engine-driver. At present, the highest certificate granted under the Machinery Act is a first-class engine-driver's certificate. While I do not in any way under-rate the work of an engine-driver, any man of ordinary intelligence, without undergoing an apprenticeship, can obtain a driver's certificate by working in a power house, gaining the necessary knowledge and passing an examination.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not give these engineers the right to drive winding engines?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Because the driving of a winding engine requires far more practical knowledge and practical ex-

perience than that obtained by a man holding an engine-driver's certificate.

Hon. J. Cornell: Boiled down, the engineers could do everything they want to do.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: At present there are hundreds of young men serving apprenticeships all over the State. They start at the very lowest rung of the ladder on a few shillings a week; they attend night school and gain theoretical knowledge in that way. If the Bill passes, it will be compulsory for them to attend night school. Surely, if they are willing to qualify themselves to undertake the higher duties mentioned in the Bill, they should be given an opportunity to obtain a certificate higher than that granted to the first-class engine-driver. One objection to the Bill that has been repeatedly made is that it would involve extra expense. It probably would, but I venture to say that the theoretical and practical knowledge which the men will gain by studying to qualify for a first or second-class engineer's certificate will certainly mean longer life for the plants they will be called upon to look after, greater efficiency and probably economy in other directions. When I read the Bill, the first question I asked myself was what would happen to the men with engine-driver's certificates. Such men are holding down important jobs and are carrying out their work efficiently and well. I put the question to one or two members, including Mr. Seddon. I am pleased to note that Mr. Seddon has an amendment on the notice paper which I think will overcome the difficulty I have mentioned. The main attractions of the measure are the many safety clauses embodied in it. Provision is made with respect to the erection of refrigerating machinery. This has to be erected carefully and well. Control of winding engines is dealt with; I think any person will admit that the driving of a winding engine calls for much efficiency. Eighteen years ago, refrigerating machinery was in its infancy; there were then but few refrigerators in the State. Now we have such machinery all over the State. We have very large refrigerating plants using ammonia exclusively, with engines from five to 150 tons refrigerating capacity.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are all inspected to-day.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The pressure of some of these is tremendous, from 120 lbs. per square inch to 220 lbs. per

square inch. If anything went wrong with such machinery, a bad accident would be likely to occur. Unfortunately, we had an unavoidable accident in Albany which caused a great deal of damage. Under present conditions, many of these compressors can be looked after by a youth over 18 years of age. In my opinion that is wrong. In fact, I remember the Minister said, when speaking to the Bill, that there was no efficient control over these large engines. The Bill is essentially a Committee Bill, but I hope that when it is passed we shall have an Act that will be amended satisfactorily. The chief consideration I have in mind is the safety of men looking after machinery. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.39]: I oppose the Bill. I feel we have in the principal Act ample provisions, and this measure would inflict much unnecessary expense and hardship on owners of machinery. The question of accidents has been raised. I have yet to learn that we have had an undue number of accidents in connection with machinery, and I am firmly convinced that the appointment of the additional inspectors proposed by the Bill will not lessen the number of such accidents. We shall always have accidents with machinery, despite any inspections that may be made. The principal Act provides for the imposition of fees: if additional inspectors are appointed the amount of those fees will be increased. Under the principal Act, the board of examiners consists of the Chief Inspector of Machinery and the Senior Inspector of Machinery, both of whom are qualified mechanical engineers, and a representative of the Engine-drivers' Association—three members in all. The representative of the Engine-drivers' Association is the only member who receives extra payment; the new proposal provides for a board consisting of five members, so the cost will be increased. In these circumstances, the Minister will have to put forward something very much more to the point to convince me that we should at this time introduce a Bill of this nature. The probability is that the personnel of the board would not be limited to five, because various other unions would want representation. They would probably be dissatisfied with the number provided by the Bill. The present board and the present

Act are all that is necessary in our present circumstances. An increase in the number of members of the board would not be an improvement.

Various clauses in the measure, if passed, would enable the board to harass owners of small plants, so I fear the Bill would not prove to be a benefit to them. We should particularly at the present juncture, do all we can to encourage people in business; and people who must have plants to run their businesses are likely to be harassed by too many inspections. We will make it more difficult for them to continue in business; and we will probably repress those who desire to embark upon industries where machinery is required. The Government would be wise to adhere to its proposal not to introduce controversial measures this session. If any measure can be called controversial, this one certainly can. In fact, it is the very acme of contentiousness. Insistence upon the various classes of engineers being registered under the measure will give no advantage from the point of view of control, and for that reason I desire to emphasise my opposition to the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [8.46]: I was very sorry to note the attitude adopted to the Bill not only by Mr. Baxter but particularly by Mr. E. H. H. Hall. This is definitely not a party measure, and I must say that I was astonished and grieved that Mr. E. H. H. Hall should make an attack on the staff of the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare.

Hon. J. Cornell: He did not make any attack on Mr. Clare.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He made an attack on the Principal Architect's department.

Hon. J. Cornell: He did not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Principal Architect was responsible for supervising the construction of the High School at Geraldton, and any member with a knowledge of his qualifications as an architect knows that what the hon. member said was absolutely untrue.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I rise to a point of order. I did not mention the Principal Architect, and I had no intention whatever of reflecting on a gentleman who is held in

the highest esteem for his professional ability.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I accept the hon. member's explanation, but notwithstanding what he has said, he attacked a member of the staff of the Principal Architect's department.

Hon. J. Cornell: He raised a protest against a bricklayer being made clerk of works.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member spoke against a member of the staff for whom the Principal Architect is responsible. Mr. Clare's work in Perth, or in any other part of the State, will compare more than favourably with that of any other architect in Western Australia or in any other State.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is the Minister's opinion.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is emphasised by his work at the East Perth School. It was not fair to subject this Bill to an attack of that kind. The measure is definitely not a party Bill.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Then what do you call it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: On the main principles, we have to be guided by expert opinion. I am pleased that Mr. Seddon is a member of this House, because he has a sound knowledge of the main principles, and will be of great assistance in the Committee stage. I wish to stress the fact that we must bring our protective legislation into line with modern requirements, and that in the last 20 years tremendous strides have been made in the types of machinery used.

In view of Mr. Baxter's assertion that many of the proposals contained in this measure would inflict further burdens on industry, members may be interested to learn that before the Bill was finally drafted, the proposed amendments were submitted for consideration to the Chamber of Mines, the Employers' Federation (Western Australia), the Perth Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Engineers (Australia), Perth Division, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and the Federated Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association. Thus at the conferences, two bodies of workers were represented, and there were four other bodies representing the employers and the industry. Several discus-

sions and conferences were held with representatives of the bodies mentioned and suggestions made by them were embodied in the Bill now before the House. I understand that the only matter that could not be satisfactorily reconciled was the objection of the Engine-driver's Union to engineers being given driving privileges, as provided in Clause 13.

Referring to the amendment stipulating that persons in charge of certain machinery shall hold an engineer's certificate, Mr. Baxter suggested that the proposal would adversely affect the timber and gold mining industries, and, in many cases "would mean dispensing with the services of certificated engine-drivers . . . or the employment of an extra worker in order to meet the requirements of the Bill." Mr. Cornell said he became angry when he thought that some chap who could fluke through an examination must have charge of the erection of such plant. Yet later he said—

The considered opinion of the union is that if these engine-drivers' certificates are granted, this will cut right across the livelihood of the men who have had to study and pass examinations for the positions they now hold.

Apparently he wishes members to agree that study or examination will not improve the status of engineers, although he says that it has worked miracles in the case of engine-drivers who, without having had any previous mechanical training, can obtain either a winding or a first-class engine-driver's certificate after practising for only 12 hours per week for 27 months, whereas an engineer must serve an apprenticeship of five years' full time work and during his apprenticeship must attend classes at a technical school. The objections of Mr. Baxter and Mr. Cornell to Clause 10 are not shared by the Chamber of Mines, the Chamber of Commerce, or the Employers' Federation. None of these bodies raised the slightest objection to the proposal to introduce engineers' certificates. In Queensland, New Zealand, and South Africa there has been provision for a number of years for the issue of such certificates.

Engineers are at present employed on practically all plants of the size that will be required by Clause 10 (1) to be under the control of a certificated engineer, so that owners will not be put to any extra expense, and their interests will be safeguarded be-

cause the proposed certificates will be an incentive to young engineers to qualify for certificates. Owing to the amount of capital that is invested in many of the modern plants in this State, it is essential that only competent technically trained engineers should be in charge of them so as to ensure that they are run to the best advantage and that proper maintenance measures are taken to prolong the useful life of the machinery or boilers.

Hon. J. Cornell: Does the Honorary Minister think that is required?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is required; damage has been done.

Hon. J. Cornell: Required after 40 years?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Numerous examples could be given of the uneconomical running of plants on the big mines, and of costly breakdowns caused by want of proper maintenance due to the employment of engineers who did not have proper qualifications. In one case, a change of engineers resulted in a saving of 50 tons of firewood per day—a reduction of over 30 per cent. In another case, an inspector of machinery insisted on the overhaul of a large winding engine which, through neglect, was reaching a dangerous condition. The cost of the overhaul was paid for in a very short time by the saving in fuel. On another group of mines, the appointment of a technically trained engineer resulted in very large savings in fuel, following the overhaul of the steam engines. To say that if certificated engineers are given driving privileges, they will supplant engine-drivers is quite incorrect. I wish to allay the fears of Mr. Cornell in this direction. If he thinks otherwise, he should move an amendment in Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell: Will not the position be that if an engineer is out of work as an engineer, he will take a job as a driver?

The HONORARY MINISTER: An engineer will not endanger the job of any competent driver in this State.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Honorary Minister says so, but I say otherwise.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Then the hon. member should move an amendment to make it quite clear.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are going to give him the right without examination.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The person in charge of the running of an engine must have continual supervision over it until he is relieved by another certificated person or until the engine is stopped. It would

be out of the question for the engineer of a plant to have continual supervision over the running of an engine or engines, and also to carry out his duties as an engineer. A number of engineers in this State hold engine-drivers' certificates, but they have not attempted to dispense with drivers on that account. Nor would they be permitted to do so. No engineer will be given the privilege of driving any type of plant, unless he can satisfy the Board of Examiners that he has had the necessary experience.

Another point on which Mr. Baxter was critical was the amendments proposed in Clauses 10 and 13 relating to refrigerating machinery engine-drivers' certificates. The hon. member must know that there are very few refrigerating plants of over five tons capacity on which engine-drivers are not now employed. In any event, the award rates have to be paid regardless of whether the person in charge holds a certificate. It is very important that persons in charge of ammonia refrigerating machinery should have a sound working knowledge of the plant, and what to do in the case of an emergency; otherwise accidents similar to that at the Ayrshire Dairy, in which two men were horribly and fatally injured, will be liable to occur at any time. As a matter of fact, an identical case of over-pressure occurred very soon afterwards, but luckily a person competent to correct the defect arrived on the scene in time to prevent a further tragedy.

Although the existing certificates cover refrigerating machinery driven by a steam engine or by an internal combustion engine of over 200 sq. inches' cylinder area, quite large refrigerating plants are driven by electric motors or internal combustion engines for which certificated engine-drivers are not required by the Act. In nearly all cases certificated engine-drivers are now employed on these refrigeration plants, so that the proposed amendment will not cause any hardship. The representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Federation expressed approval of this amendment, as modified by the proposed exemptions in Clause 10, Subclause (4) (g). Provision has been made for two grades of refrigerating machinery drivers in order that drivers might gain practical experience in the running of smaller plants before presenting themselves for the examination that would permit them to drive a plant of over

30 tons' capacity. Incidentally, the Queensland Act provides for two similar grades.

The statement by Mr. Baxter that the equivalent of a motor driver's certificate is attempted in the privileges of the proposed engineer's certificate is sheer assumption. There are several large plants driven entirely by electric motors; for instance, at the Cresco and Mt. Lyell Superphosphate Works, Bassendean. It was necessary therefore to make provision for such works when setting out the privileges of a second-class engineer's certificate.

Hon. J. Cornell. Then superphosphate will cost more.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Baxter suggested that the amendment proposed in Clause 10 (4) (f) would seriously affect a number of small power plants for electric light installed in country towns. Under the engine-drivers' awards, No. 14 of 1936, and No. 18 of 1937, which cover country electric light stations, the rate of wage fixed is independent of whether the driver is required to hold a certificate under the Act or not. Under award No. 10 of 1934, which covers the Goldfields, the rate of wages for internal combustion engine-drivers is fixed according to the horse-power of the engine, and the scale includes engines considerably below the limit of 114 square inches' cylinder area proposed in this amendment. Therefore, if the exemption is reduced from 200 square inches to 114 square inches' cylinder area, employers will not be required to pay any higher wages to their engine-drivers. Mr. Cornell was not correct in saying that this legislation would bring under the Act internal combustion engines that were not at present being inspected.

Hon. J. Cornell: I made a personal explanation dealing with that point earlier this afternoon.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. All internal combustion engines of one horse power or over, except those exempted by Section 4 are now and have been inspected since the passing of the 1904 Act. The amendments in Clause 10 refer solely to the necessity for having certain types of engines etc. brought under the control of certificated persons.

The reduction in the size of an internal combustion engine, which is required by the Act to be under the control of a certificated person, was requested by the representatives of the Engine-drivers' Union. As 114

square inches of cylinder area was the size recommended by the Interstate conference and the limit in the South Australian Act is also 114 squares inches, the Minister for Mines agreed to include this reduction in the proposed amendments. In all fairness to the Engine-drivers' Union I have pointed out that, under the engine-drivers' awards No. 14 of 1936, and No. 18 of 1937, which cover the country electric light stations, the rate of wages fixed is independent of whether the driver is or is not required to hold a certificate under the Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the 12-inch cylinder engines on stations, or the 2 six-cylinder oil engines? What will happen there? The driver must have a certificate before he can drive such engines.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think so. Under award No. 10 of 1934, which covers the goldfields, the rate of wages for internal combustion engines is fixed, as I have shown, according to the horse power of the engines, and the scale includes engines considerably below the limit of 114 square inches cylinder area proposed in the Bill. If, therefore, the exemption is reduced from 200 square inches to 114 square inches cylinder area, employers will not be required to pay any higher wages to their engine drivers.

Commenting on the proposal to increase the personnel of the board of examiners from three to five, Mr. Baxter said, "There is no warrant for increasing its membership". He and Mr. Hall saw in the amendment "a political move to find jobs for friends of the Government." It is sheer nonsense to make a statement of that character. The amendment has been brought forward for two reasons. As members probably know, the State Mining Engineer is also the Chief Inspector of Mines. Because his other occupations preclude him from sitting on the board, it is necessary to provide for the Deputy Chief Inspector of Machinery to be chairman of the board in his absence, and for the senior inspector of machinery to be a member. Then again, it is desired to authorise the appointment of another member outside the department to represent engineers when the board is dealing with engineers' certificates. Since the board was first constituted in 1904, it has always included a representative of the

engine-drivers, and therefore it is only reasonable, now that we are making provision for the issue of engineers' certificates, to enable the engineers to be similarly represented. That disposes of the weak argument that the Government is actuated only by a desire to find jobs for political supporters.

This is definitely not a party Bill. The proposed arrangement will make for greater efficiency on the part of the board. At no time since the inception of the board has any political appointment been made or even suggested. The two department officers, as members of the board, receive no extra remuneration, and the third member, Mr. J. Breydon, was appointed by competitive examination when the board was first formed, and he still is a member of the board. Should he resign, the same procedure will most likely be adopted in appointing a successor, and also in the appointment of the member required to hold an engineer's certificate.

With regard to the remarks of Mr. Cornell that there was nothing in the Bill about the qualification of the two members of the board, I point out that Section 54 of the Act specifies that two members of the board shall be "qualified persons". Those words were inadvertently omitted. Neither in the Mines Regulation Act 1904, nor the Inspection of Machinery Act 1904 and 1921, was any standard laid down for the qualifications the State Mining Engineer, the Chief Inspector of Mines, or the Chief Inspector of Machinery, was required to hold. It would appear to be unnecessary, therefore, to specify the qualifications required to be held by members of the board of examiners. It may interest Mr. Cornell to know that the Chief Inspector of Machinery held a position on a mine at the salary above the figure he mentioned.

Hon. J. Cornell: But not as an engineer.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Cornell said that the Engine-drivers' Union did not ask for the insertion of the proviso but the member of the board of examiners who was required to hold a winding engine-driver's certificate should be a member of the union. The hon. member has evidently been misinformed, because that request was made to the Minister for Mines when he met the representatives of the Boulder branch of the Engine-drivers' Union at a conference held at Boulder on the 11th July last.

Hon. J. Cornell: The bulk of the engine-drivers do not want that privilege.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The point is, do the people want it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, for their own protection. Two or three members have said that the public have not asked for this Bill. The people trust the Government, and Parliament, as well as heads of departments, to keep protective legislation abreast of modern requirements.

Hon. J. Cornell: Particularly the Workers' Homes Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is moderate enough. It is the job of departments to apprise Parliament when amendments to Acts become necessary. As I have said, after 20 years we find that a tremendous advancement has been made in all types of machinery.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is the duty of the Government to administer the Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is the duty of officials to inform the Government when amendments are necessary. This is purely a departmental Bill. The composition of the board of examiners for granting engineers' certificates, set out in South African regulation No. 306, is as follows:—

The Chief Inspector of Machinery, or in his absence an inspector of machinery, who shall be chairman, an inspector of mines or deputy inspector of mines; and three certificated mechanical or electrical engineers.

For the granting of engine-drivers' certificates the board is composed as follows:—

The Chief Inspector of Machinery, or in his absence an inspector of machinery who shall be chairman; two certificated mechanical engineers, or one certificated mechanical engineer and one certificated electrical engineer, and two certificated winding engine-drivers employed in driving an engine of the kind described in Regulation 41.

Regulation No. 41 refers to winding engines used for the conveyance of persons. Section 43 of the Queensland Inspection of Machinery Act says—

Examinations for certificates of competency shall be supervised by such persons as may be appointed by and under the direction of a board consisting of the Chief Inspector, and two persons, one of whom shall be the holder of an engineer's certificate and the other of whom shall be the holder of a first-class engine-driver's certificate appointed by the Governor-in-Council; any two members of the board to form a quorum.

It will thus be seen that the proposed composition of the board, as set out in Clause

11, is similar both to the South African and Queensland boards, and that the proposed number of active members is one less than in the case of the South African board and one more than in the case of the Queensland board. There is no provision in any of the Acts to which I have referred for a representative of the employers to be a member of the board. The Queensland Act provides for two grades of engineers' certificates and for two grades of refrigeration certificates.

Both Mr. Baxter and Mr. Cornell raised objections to Clause 14, providing for the granting of certificates to the holder of the Board of Trade engineers' certificate.

Hon. J. Cornell: I did not object.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Bill does not propose to delete the first paragraph of Section 63 of the principal Act, which specifies, *inter alia*, that the certificate will be granted only—

On proof that the applicant is a resident in the State of Western Australia, and a person of good repute, and on production of satisfactory references and a certificate granted after an examination by the Board of Trade, etc.

The existing Section 63 is as it was in the 1904 Inspection of Machinery Act. It provides for granting without examination a first-class engine-driver's certificate to the holder of a first or second-class engineer's certificate granted by the Board of Trade. This entitles—

The holder thereof to drive and have charge of any stationary steam engine, including steam turbines, other than a winding engine by which men are raised or lowered at the time he is in charge, and of its boilers.

Since the passing of the principal Act in 1922 the Board of Trade has introduced another certificate, or an endorsement on a steam certificate, entitling the holder to have charge of the engines on ships that are driven by internal combustion engines. The minimum qualifying period for this certificate is 18 months actually on watch on the main propelling machinery of an ocean-going ship, and, before any person is accepted as a junior engineer, he must have served an apprenticeship in an approved engineering works. A candidate for an internal combustion engine-driver's certificate granted under the Act does not need to have any previous mechanical training, and is only required to have 12 months' experience of 12 hours per week assisting

in the driving of an engine the cylinder area of which is not less than a hundred square inches, and about 80 horse-power, compared with a ship's engines which aggregate thousands of horse-power. It is ridiculous to expect the holder of a Board of Trade engineer's certificate for motor ships to pass another examination before he can be granted an internal combustion engine-driver's certificate under this Act.

The engineer's certificate it is proposed to grant under Clause 11 will be made as nearly as possible the equivalent of the Board of Trade certificate of equal grade, so that a marine engineer shall be entitled to an engineer's certificate granted under this clause without further examination.

All ocean-going ships are now supplied with refrigerating machinery; therefore marine engineers should be entitled to a refrigeration machinery certificate. Most people will agree that the mechanical training and practical engineering experience acquired by a marine engineer should fit him to take charge of a small locomotive on a 20 or 24 gauge tram line, or to drive a crane. The provisions of Clause 14 (a) and (b) are not so revolutionary as they appear to be. Clause 14 (c) has been in force since 1904, and is not altered by this Bill. Each time the representatives of the Engine-drivers' Union conferred with the Minister for Mines, the union representatives said that they did not object to this clause, because they knew that the holder of a marine engineer's certificate must have had more experience of running engines than was required by the Act for a man to qualify for an engine-driver's certificate. The examinations that a marine engineer is expected to pass are of a very much higher standard than are the examinations for engine-driver's certificates under the Act. Only four certificates have been granted to marine engineers under Section 63 in the past four years, and only 14 in the last seven years, so that it is not correct to say that marine engineers will deprive our own people of jobs.

The board of examiners has never granted certificates indiscriminately. It has always taken full advantage of the provisions of Section 57, which gives it authority to restrict the privileges of any certificate. Certificated marine engineers fill many of the highest posts in this State that

are available to mechanical engineers, as engineers in charge of the largest mines, and large plants in other parts of the State. The Chief Engineer and all the shift engineers at both the Collie Power Station and the Wyndham Meatworks, and seven out of the nine shift engineers at the East Perth Power Station, hold marine engineers' certificates. The majority of these men who were born in this State went to sea to complete their training. The present day training of a marine engineer makes him eminently suitable for taking charge of large plants, and to organise the staff under his control. To my knowledge that is the position. We must give credit to young men who break away from Western Australia, take positions on ships and qualify for their marine engineering certificates. It would be unjust and foolish to debar them from the rights and privileges indicated in the Bill.

As to the position regarding marine engineers' certificates, Mr. Baxter professed to be astounded at what he termed "the proposal to grant engineers' certificates ad libitum to persons possessed of first, second or third class marine engine certificates." The position now is that, while the Board of Examiners is authorised under Section 63 to grant steam engine-drivers' certificates to holders of marine engine steam certificates, it has not similar power in respect to the issue of internal combustion engine-drivers' certificates. This, obviously, is an anomaly that should be rectified. It is felt, moreover, that the training of a marine engineer is such as to entitle him to drive cranes, small locomotives and refrigerating machinery. As to Mr. Cornell's interjection to the effect that a marine engineer should not be put on a winding engine, the proposed amendment will in no way extend the privileges granted in respect of winding engines, which have existed since 1904.

Hon. J. Cornell: The holder of a first-class marine engine-driver's certificate could drive anything bar a locomotive and a winding engine.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Such a man would not want to run a little tin-pot locomotive! The present first-class engine-drivers' certificate is the equivalent of the second-class certificate issued under the 1904 Act, and entitles a holder to drive a winding engine when used for lowering or raising

materials only, but not when men are being raised or lowered. The proposed amendment in Clause 14 will not in any way disturb the existing position. The Federated Engine-driver's Union, which is the body most concerned, has never raised any objection to the provision in Section 63, neither has it raised any objection to the proposed amendment in Clause 14. Certainly the board has never granted certificates indiscriminately, but has always taken advantage of the provisions of Section 57, which give it full authority to restrict the privileges of any certificate.

In opposing the amendments which seek to provide for the inspection of all steam generators and of air receivers having an internal diameter of not less than nine inches, Mr. Baxter failed to advance one valid reason why the House should reject these proposals. He appears to think that boilers used for generating steam at a pressure above that of the atmosphere, which are used in clubs, hospitals, institutions, hotels, etc., are not at present inspected. These boilers have always been inspected, except a few worked at below ten pounds pressure prior to 1922. Very few of these boilers now work at less than 60 lbs. pressure, and those at the Perth Hospital work at a pressure of 150 lbs. In the strict legal sense, these boilers cannot be said to be used, "for working any kind of machinery, or for any manufacturing or like purpose." If the proposed amendment is passed, it will not alter the procedure which has been adopted since 1922, and will not bring even one extra boiler under the provisions of the Act, but will make strictly legal a very necessary function of the Inspection of Machinery Branch, namely, that of safeguarding the lives of persons in public buildings.

As to air receivers, no control can be exercised at present over the manufacture of any of these vessels that have a capacity not exceeding 5 cubic feet. Many air receivers are badly designed and would not conform to any recognised rules for the construction of such vessels. Owing to competition, some local firms which were making these receivers out of 3/16 inch or 1/4 inch plate have had to make them out of 1/8 inch plate, because rival firms both in this and other States were doing so. Thus, as a result of the lack of departmental control, the user is being supplied with an inferior article that is frequently a definite source of danger. Every new receiver exceeding 5 cubic feet capacity, whether built locally

or imported, is inspected by an inspector of machinery before it is delivered to the purchaser's premises. The inspector computes the safe working pressure which can be allowed; he tests the receiver by hydraulic pressure to twice the working pressure, sees that the fittings supplied are of good quality and in conformity with the Act, and that a manhole or sufficient hand holes are provided, so that the internal corrosion can be correctly estimated at each annual inspection. The purchaser thus has a guarantee that he is getting a receiver which will be suitable for his needs, and which will have a useful life of at least 20 years with reasonable care and maintenance. The annual fee for the inspection of small receivers is only 10s., and for this expenditure the owner gets the benefit of the expert advice of the Department's officers, as well as a guarantee that the vessel is suitable for the working pressure shown on the certificate, and that the fittings are in good order. The amended English Factories Act, which came into force on the 21st July, 1938, makes it compulsory for the owner to have every vessel containing compressed air or gas, other than a pipe or coil, inspected by a competent person. No limit is fixed for the minimum capacity or diameter.

The statement by Mr. Baxter was quite correct when he said that an inspector could insist on a safety valve being fitted to a receiver not exceeding 5 cubic feet diameter, provided that the compressor attached to the receiver was driven by a motor of one horsepower or over. This provision is of little avail when no control can be exercised over faulty designs or excessive working pressures, or when the inspector has no power to insist on adequate hand holes being provided to permit him to ascertain the amount of corrosion which has taken place in the receiver subsequent to its construction. The air receiver that burst at Bunbury was of less than 5 cubic feet capacity, and therefore was not under the control of the Inspection of Machinery Branch.

The proposals contained in Clause 5, provide that specifications shall be submitted to the Chief Inspector for his approval where it is desired to erect winding engines or refrigerators. Mr. Baxter stated that these provisions needed overhauling because it might be difficult and expensive to prepare or locate documents for second-

hand plant. Members will realise, however, that it is quite as important—if anything it is more important—that control should be exercised over the erection of secondhand winding engines or refrigerating machinery as well as over new plant. If the owner cannot obtain the required information, then the officers of the Department will follow the procedure adopted in the case of secondhand boilers, etc. That is to say, they will assess the safe load or working pressure on the condition of the plant as disclosed by a thorough inspection. At least three mining companies were put to considerable and unnecessary expense through installing secondhand winding engines, without first consulting the inspector for the district, as to whether the engine would comply with the regulations, and be otherwise suitable for the work required. The Chamber of Mines fully recognised this fact, and raised no objection to the amendment in Clause 5 (a). The suggested wording of Clause 5 (b) was altered to meet the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Federation. Their representatives are quite satisfied with the wording of Clause 5 (b) as it now appears in the Bill. The object of this amendment is to ensure that the person intending to erect refrigerating machinery shall ascertain, before commencing erection, that the plant will conform to the regulations. These will be based on the Standards Association of Australia Refrigeration Code, and this should ensure that the plant will be installed in conformity with modern practice. A similar procedure has been adopted in the case of lifts since 1922.

Some members are of the opinion that the proposed amendments can only have the effect of building up the Department at the expense of industry. Mr. Baxter stated that "the occurrence of a few accidents over the years is no strong recommendation for the introduction of innovations during a period when the world's freedom is being challenged by countries opposed to democracy." On these grounds, he urged that "it would be wise and reasonable for members to reject the Bill." As to building up the Department, I am informed that the additional work created by the passing of the 1921 Act was far greater than any prospective addition that may be entailed through the enactment of this measure. No increase in staff was made in 1922, and even now, although the work of

the Machinery Branch has more than doubled in the intervening period, the work is still being carried out by the same number of inspectors. This has been made possible by alterations in office routine, greatly improved travelling facilities, and improved esprit de corps.

I shall say no more. I have found it necessary to make a lengthy reply to the debate and I ask members to discount any suggestion that the Bill has been introduced for political purposes. The measure is technical and has been submitted to the Government by its technical advisers who administer the department. It embodies amendments to the principal Act that have been agreed to by all parties concerned. I maintain it is the duty of this House to take notice accordingly. Despite the fact that the Bill is highly technical, members, by application, can arrive at an understanding of its provisions. At least they should be able to understand its main principles and agree to its second reading.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	15

Majority against 6

AYES.	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)
NOES.	
Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Maun
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)

PAIR.	
AYE.	NO.
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [9.31]: I hope members will pass the second reading. The Bill is a result of repeated discussions with the Local Government Association. The

object is to prevent loss of life. The progress of motor traffic makes the maintenance of 50 level crossings in the metropolitan area ridiculous. Although many members have expressed hostility to the measure, I hope they will reconsider their opinions before voting against the Bill. The general trend of the arguments raised by hon. members is that the Minister for Railways desires to close certain crossings and that the Bill will place autocratic power in the hands of the Commissioner to the detriment of residents in the vicinity of crossings; and also that the Commissioner desires to ride rough shod over the rights and interests of individuals. This is not the case. Members will agree that with the increase of road traffic, unprotected level crossings constitute a grave danger. Protective devices at level crossings are expensive to provide and maintain. To provide protective appliances at all level crossings throughout the State is impossible, but the elimination of a number of the less used crossings would make the task of protecting the public on the remainder of the crossings less burdensome. The sole object of the Bill is the safety of the public, more especially that portion of the public which makes use of level crossings.

Regarding the composition of the board, the Bill proposes that a personnel of three—a representative of the Commissioner of Railways, a representative of the local authority in whose district the crossing proposed to be closed is situated and an independent chairman to be agreed upon by the Local Government Association and the Commissioner of Railways.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What if they do not agree? That is the point.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Does the hon. member suggest that at any time an impasse will occur? I do not think there will be any trouble at all. In the Legislative Assembly an amendment was agreed to that outside the metropolitan area the chairman shall be the stipendiary magistrate for the district. Mr. Thomson, and also most of the other members who spoke, contended that this would be a one-sided board with a bias in favour of the Commissioner. As, however, the Local Government Association is composed of representatives of the local authorities and can therefore be considered to speak with the authority of the local governing bodies, and as that organisation has

equal say in the selection of the chairman, there can be no question of any balance in favour of the Commissioner. The Board will come to its decision on the evidence tendered to it from both sides and the chairman's voice should be entirely impartial.

The list of level crossings it is considered should be closed, was prepared by a committee consisting of representatives of the Railway Department, the Police Department, the Main Roads Department, the Town Planning Commissioner, the Royal Automobile Club and the Metropolitan Local Governing Bodies Association, who went into the question very thoroughly in 1935-6. This list will form the foundation on which applications for closure of crossings will be made, but each crossing will require to be the subject of a separate application to the board, which will come to a decision in accordance with the evidence submitted in each case.

The argument has been used repeatedly during the debate that the crossings are to be closed in the interests of the Commissioner. In fact, any closure will be entirely in the interests of safety, both of the travelling public and road users. In this connection I ask members to imagine the feelings of married engine-drivers bearing upon their shoulders the responsibilities of a family and subjected to the tremendous strain of driving express trains at a speed over crossings especially in the metropolitan or the inner metropolitan area. Is it fair for this unnecessary responsibility to be thrown upon engine-drivers? I say that it is not.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The railway department should take care of the level crossings.

The HONORARY MINISTER: How is it possible economically to safeguard every one of the 50 crossings in the metropolitan area? It is not practicable. The desire to save life has actuated members of local governing bodies continually to clamour for the closure of level crossings in the metropolitan area.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why not confine the measure to the metropolitan area?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member can move an amendment to that effect if he wishes. There is no doubt that most of the dangerous crossings are in the metropolitan area, although there are some in other parts of the State. Some action should be taken as a result of the agitation

to close such crossings. Mr. Mann referred to the one-sidedness of the Bill as having relation to the closure of crossings only. There is no necessity to provide for the opening of new crossings. The function of the Bill is to deal with the closure of crossings which are dangerous or redundant.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There would be a better chance of the Bill being passed if it contained a provision for the opening of other crossings.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Mann's reference to people along the Albany-road travelling to the city in buses is irrelevant to the question, but in any case it is difficult to see how the closure of certain crossings can have any effect whatever in dissuading people from travelling to the city by bus. Mr. Seddon suggested an amendment giving the board power to direct that where a level crossing is closed the Commissioner shall provide a suitable sub-way or bridge for the carrying of the necessary traffic. The expense involved in such a provision would be tremendous, and could not be contemplated in the present state of the Government finances. Mr. Tuckey referred to a letter from the Gosnells Road Board in which it was stated that five crossings were to be closed in the board's district. The number it is considered might well be closed is four, and in all but one case road access is available to other crossings in the vicinity. That letter is a gross exaggeration.

Members should take notice of the considered opinion of the Local Government Association. In no sense of the word can that association be claimed as a supporter of the Labour Government. It comprises a body of men who have the interests of their own particular districts at heart and no political aspirations. They are doing work in the interests of their particular districts and their opinion should be heeded. That opinion is embodied in the Bill. I ask members seriously to reflect before rejecting the measure. I did not like the tone of the various speeches.

Hon. W. J. Mann: If the Bill were made to apply to the Metropolitan-Suburban area, it might be passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I ask members to consider that the local authorities desire the passing of the Bill.

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

Ayes	7
Noes	17
Majority against ..	10

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. V. Hameraley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th October, 1939.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Profiteering Prevention Bill.